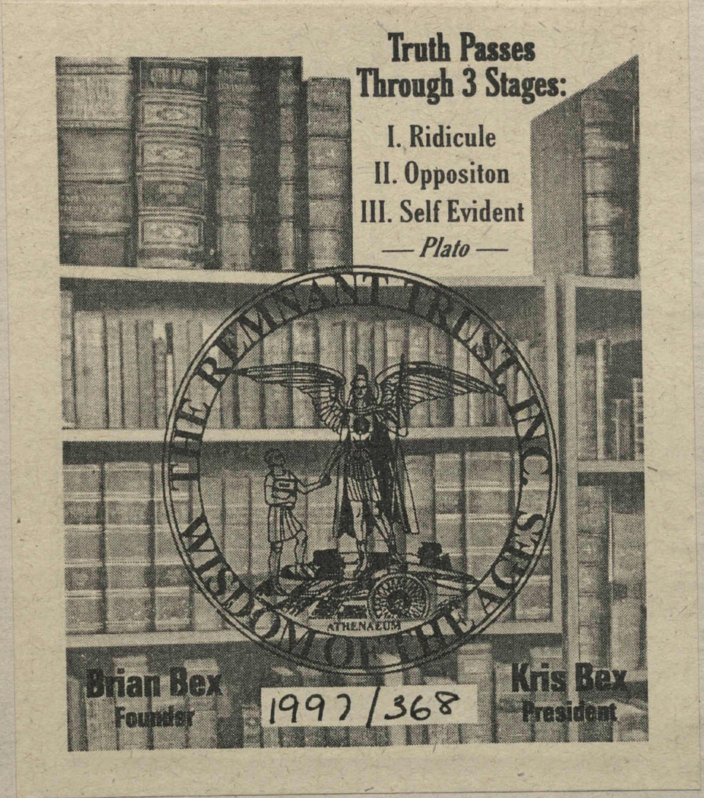
WOLLSTONECRAFT
RIGHTS OF
WOMEN

1st edition


Truth Passes
Through 3 Stages:
I. Ridicule
II. Oppositon
III. Self Evident
— *Plato* —

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# A VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN:

## WITH STRICTURES ON POLITICAL AND MORAL SUBJECTS.

By MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

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1792.

### TO

## M. TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD,

### LATE BISHOP OF AUTUN.

SIR,

HAVING read with great pleaſure a pamphlet, which you have lately publiſhed, on National Education, I dedicate this volume to you—the firſt dedication that I have ever written, to induce you to read it with attention; and, becauſe I think that you will underſtand me, which I do not ſuppoſe many pert witlings will, who may ridicule the arguments they are unable to anſwer. But, Sir, I carry my reſpect for your underſtanding ſtill farther; ſo far, that I am confident you will not throw my work aſide, and haſtily conclude that I am in the wrong, becauſe you did not view the ſubject in the ſame light yourſelf.—And, pardon my frankneſs, but I muſt obſerve, that you treated it in too curſory a manner, contented to conſider it as it had been conſidered formerly, when the rights of man, not to advert to woman, were trampled on as chimerical—I call upon you, therefore, now to weigh what I have advanced reſpecting the rights of woman, and national education—and I call with the firm tone of humanity. For my arguments, Sir, are dictated by a diſintereſted ſpirit—I plead for my ſex—not for myſelf. Independence I have long conſidered as the grand bleſſing of life, the baſis of every virtue—and independence I will ever ſecure by contracting my wants, though I were to live on a barren heath.

It is then an affection for the whole human race that makes my pen dart rapidly

along to ſupport what I believe to be the cauſe of virtue: and the ſame motive leads me earneſtly to wiſh to ſee woman placed in a ſtation in which ſhe would advance, inſtead of retarding, the progreſs of thoſe glorious principles that give a ſubſtance to morality. My opinion, indeed, reſpecting the rights and duties of woman, ſeems to flow ſo naturally from theſe ſimple principles, that I think it ſcarcely poſſible, but that ſome of the enlarged minds who formed your admirable conſtitution, will coincide with me.

In France there is undoubtedly a more general diffuſion of knowledge than in any part of the European world, and I attribute it, in a great meaſure, to the ſocial intercourſe which has long ſubſiſted between the ſexes. It is true, I utter my ſentiments with freedom, that in France the very eſſence of ſenſuality has been extracted to regale the voluptuary, and a kind of ſentimental luſt has prevailed, which, together with the ſyſtem of duplicity that the whole tenour of their political and civil government taught, have given a ſiniſter ſort of ſagacity to the French character, properly termed fineſſe, and a poliſh of manners that injures the ſubſtance, by hunting ſincerity out of ſociety.—And, modeſty, the faireſt garb of virtue! has been more groſsly inſulted in France than even in England, till their women have treated as *prudiſh* that attention to decency, which brutes inſtinctively obſerve.

Manners and morals are ſo nearly allied that they have often been confounded; but, though the former ſhould only be the natural reflection of the latter, yet, when various cauſes have produced factitious and corrupt manners, which are very early caught, morality becomes an empty name. The perſonal reſerve, and ſacred reſpect for cleanlineſs and delicacy in domeſtic life, which French women almoſt deſpiſe, are the graceful pillars of modeſty; but, far from deſpiſing them, if the pure flame of patriotiſm have reached their boſoms, they ſhould labour to improve the morals of their fellow-citizens, by teaching men, not only to reſpect modeſty in women, but to acquire it themſelves, as the only way to merit their eſteem.

Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this ſimple principle, that if ſhe be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, ſhe will ſtop the progreſs of knowledge, for truth muſt be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with reſpect to its influence on general practice. And how can woman be expected to co-operate unleſs ſhe know why ſhe ought to be virtuous? unleſs freedom ſtrengthen her reaſon till ſhe comprehend her duty, and ſee in what manner it is connected with her real good? If children are to be educated to underſtand the true principle of patriotiſm, their mother muſt be a patriot; and the love of mankind, from which an orderly train of virtues ſpring, can only be produced by conſidering the moral and civil intereſt of mankind; but the education and ſituation of woman, at preſent, ſhuts her out from ſuch inveſtigations.

In this work I have produced many arguments, which to me were concluſive, to prove that the prevailing notion reſpecting a ſexual character was ſubverſive of morality, and I have contended, that to render the human body and mind more perfect, chaſtity muſt more univerſally prevail, and that chaſtity will never be reſpected in the male world till the perſon of a woman is not, as it were, idolized, when little virtue or ſenſe embelliſh it with the grand traces of mental beauty, or the intereſting ſimplicity of affection.

Conſider, Sir, diſpaſſionately, theſe obſervations—for a glimpſe of this truth ſeemed to open

open before you when you obſerved, 'that 'to ſee one half of the human race excluded 'by the other from all participation of government, was a political phænomenon 'that, according to abſtract principles, it 'was impoſſible to explain.' If ſo, on what does your conſtitution reſt? If the abſtract rights of man will bear diſcuſſion and explanation, thoſe of woman, by a parity of reaſoning, will not ſhrink from the ſame teſt; though a different opinion prevails in this country, built on the very arguments which you uſe to juſtify the oppreſſion of woman—preſcription.

Conſider, I addreſs you as a legiſlator, whether, when men contend for their freedom, and to be allowed to judge for themſelves reſpecting their own happineſs, it be not inconſiſtent and unjuſt to ſubjugate women, even though you firmly believe that you are acting in the manner beſt calculated to promote their happineſs? Who made man the excluſive judge, if woman partake with him the gift of reaſon?

In this ſtyle, argue tyrants of every denomination, from the weak king to the weak father of a family; they are all eager to cruſh reaſon; yet always aſſert that they uſurp its throne only to be uſeful. Do you not act a ſimilar part, when you *force* all women, by denying them civil and political rights, to remain immured in their families groping in the dark? for ſurely, Sir, you will not aſſert, that a duty can be binding which is not founded on reaſon? If indeed this be their deſtination, arguments may be drawn from reaſon: and thus auguſtly ſupported, the more underſtanding women acquire, the more they will be attached to their duty—comprehending it—for unleſs they comprehend it, unleſs their morals be fixed on the ſame immutable principle as thoſe of man, no authority can make them diſcharge it in a virtuous manner. They may be convenient ſlaves, but ſlavery will have its conſtant effect, degrading the maſter and the abject dependent.

But, if women are to be excluded, without having a voice, from a participation of the natural rights of mankind, prove firſt, to ward off the charge of injuſtice and inconſiſtency, that they want reaſon—elſe this flaw in your NEW CONSTITUTION, the firſt conſtitution founded on reaſon, will ever ſhew that man muſt, in ſome ſhape, act like a tyrant, and tyranny, in whatever part of ſociety it rears its brazen front, will ever undermine morality.

I have repeatedly aſſerted, and produced what appeared to me irrefragable arguments drawn from matters of fact, to prove my aſſertion, that women cannot, by force, be confined to domeſtic concerns; for they will, however ignorant, intermeddle with more weighty affairs, neglecting private duties only to diſturb, by cunning tricks, the orderly plans of reaſon which riſe above their comprehenſion.

Beſides, whilſt they are only made to acquire perſonal accompliſhments, men will ſeek for pleaſure in variety, and faithleſs huſbands will make faithleſs wives; ſuch ignorant beings, indeed, will be very excuſable when, not taught to reſpect public good, nor allowed any civil rights, they attempt to do themſelves juſtice by retaliation.

The box of miſchief thus opened in ſociety, what is to preſerve private virtue, the only ſecurity of public freedom and univerſal happineſs?

Let there be then no coercion *eſtabliſhed* in ſociety, and the common law of gravity prevailing, the ſexes will fall into their proper places. And, now that more equitable laws are forming your citizens, marriage may become more ſacred: your young men may chooſe wives from motives of affection, and your maidens allow love to root out vanity.

The father of a family will not then weaken his conſtitution and debaſe his ſentiments, by viſiting the harlot, nor forget, in obeying the call of appetite, the purpoſe for which it was implanted. And, the mother will not neglect her children to practiſe the arts of coquetry, when ſenſe and modeſty ſecure her the friendſhip of her huſband.

But, till men become attentive to the duty of a father, it is vain to expect women to ſpend that time in their nurſery which they, 'wiſe in their generation,' chooſe to ſpend at their glaſs; for this exertion of cunning is only an inſtinct of nature to enable them to obtain indirectly a little of that power of which they are unjuſtly denied a ſhare: for, if women are not permitted to enjoy legitimate rights, they will render both men and themſelves vicious, to obtain illicit privileges.

I wiſh, Sir, to ſet ſome inveſtigations of this kind afloat in France; and ſhould they lead to a confirmation of my principles, when your conſtitution is reviſed the Rights of Woman may be reſpected, if it be fully proved that reaſon calls for this reſpect, and loudly demands JUSTICE for one half of the human race.

I am, SIR,

Your's reſpectfully,

M. W.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN I began to write this work, I divided it into three parts, ſuppoſing that one volume would contain a full diſcuſſion of the arguments which ſeemed to me to riſe naturally from a few ſimple principles; but freſh illuſtrations occurring as I advanced, I now preſent only the firſt part to the public.

Many ſubjects, however, which I have curſorily alluded to, call for particular inveſtigation, eſpecially the laws relative to women, and the conſideration of their peculiar duties. Theſe will furniſh ample matter for a ſecond volume, which in due time will be publiſhed, to elucidate ſome of the ſentiments, and complete many of the ſketches begun in the firſt.

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## ERRATA.

Page 10. l. 3. from bot. for *infantine*, read *infantile*.
24. — 8. —— for *rotine*, r. *routine*.
46. Note, and p. 163, l. 16. for *paradiſaical*, r. *paradiſiacal*.
91. l. 5. for *allegorial*, r. *allegorical*.
115. — 8. for *retard*, r. *retards*.
123. — 14. for *locallized*, r. *localized*.
139. Note, for *this deſcription*, r. *theſe deſcriptions*.
155. l. 2. f. b. for *Magdalenes*, r. *Magdalens*.
158, 190, 200, 400, for *harem*, r. *haram*.
166. l. 14. for *ſhape*, r. *ſhapes*.
209. — 14. for *image*, r. *images*.
211. l. 8. f. b. for *procures*, r. *procure*.
232. — 4. for *devoutedly*, r. *devotedly*.
255. Note, l. 2. dele *And*.
276. l. ult. for *uſtic*. r. *ruſtic*.
285. — 9. for *has*, r. *haſt*.
292. — 6. for *roſe*, r. *riſen*.
294. — 12. for *mein*, r. *mien*.
309. — 4. f. b. for *whoſe*, r. *who*.
359. l. 2. f. b. for *they*, r. *others*.
366. l. 11. for *catiſh*, r. *cattiſh*.
369. l. 4. f. b. for *haſt*, r. *has*.
371. l. 4. for *baniſhes*, r. *baniſh*.
406. l. 13. for *men*, r. *man*.
407. l. 4. for *mind*, r. *minds*.
—— l. 6. for *produce*, r. *produces*.
446. l. 1. for *undermines*, r. *undermine*.

# INTRODUCTION.

AFTER conſidering the hiſtoric page, and viewing the living world with anxious ſolicitude, the moſt melancholy emotions of ſorrowful indignation have depreſſed my ſpirits, and I have ſighed when obliged to confeſs, that either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the civilization which has hitherto taken place in the world has been very partial. I have turned over various books written on the ſubject of education, and patiently obſerved the conduct of parents and the management of ſchools; but what has been the reſult?—a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand ſource of the miſery I deplore; and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring cauſes, originating from one haſty concluſion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy ſtate; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a ſoil, ſtrength and uſefulneſs are ſacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleaſed a faſtidious eye, fade, diſregarded on the ſtalk, long before the ſeaſon when they ought to have arrived at maturity.—One cauſe of this barren blooming I attribute to a falſe ſyſtem of education, gathered from the books written on this ſubject by men who, conſidering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring miſtreſſes than rational wives; and the underſtanding of the ſex has been ſo bubbled by this ſpecious homage, that the civilized women of the preſent century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inſpire love, when they ought to cheriſh a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact reſpect.

In a treatiſe, therefore, on female rights and manners, the works which have been particularly written for their improvement muſt not be overlooked; eſpecially when it is aſſerted, in direct terms, that the minds of women are enfeebled by falſe refinement; that

that the books of inſtruction, written by men of genius, have had the ſame tendency as more frivolous productions; and that, in the true ſtyle of Mahometaniſm, they are only conſidered as females, and not as a part of the human ſpecies, when improvable reaſon is allowed to be the dignified diſtinction which raiſes men above the brute creation, and puts a natural ſceptre in a feeble hand.

Yet, becauſe I am a woman, I would not lead my readers to ſuppoſe that I mean violently to agitate the conteſted queſtion reſpecting the equality or inferiority of the ſex; but as the ſubject lies in my way, and I cannot paſs it over without ſubjecting the main tendency of my reaſoning to miſconſtruction, I ſhall ſtop a moment to deliver, in a few words, my opinion.—In the government of the phyſical world it is obſervable that the female, in general, is inferior to the male. The male purſues, the female yields —this is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be ſuſpended or abrogated in favour of woman. This phyſical ſuperiority cannot be denied—and it is a noble prerogative! But not content with this natural pre-eminence,

minence, men endeavour to ſink us ſtill lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment; and women, intoxicated by the adoration which men, under the influence of their ſenſes, pay them, do not ſeek to obtain a durable intereſt in their hearts, or to become the friends of the fellow creatures who find amuſement in their ſociety.

I am aware of an obvious inference:—from every quarter have I heard exclamations againſt maſculine women; but where are they to be found? If by this appellation men mean to inveigh againſt their ardour in hunting, ſhooting, and gaming, I ſhall moſt cordially join in the cry; but if it be againſt the imitation of manly virtues, or, more properly ſpeaking, the attainment of thoſe talents and virtues, the exerciſe of which ennobles the human character, and which raiſe females in the ſcale of animal being, when they are comprehenſively termed mankind;—all thoſe who view them with a philoſophical eye muſt, I ſhould think, wiſh with me, that they may every day grow more and more maſculine.

This diſcuſſion naturally divides the ſubject. I ſhall firſt conſider women in the grand light of human creatures, who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to unfold their faculties; and afterwards I ſhall more particularly point out their peculiar deſignation.

I wiſh alſo to ſteer clear of an error which many reſpectable writers have fallen into; for the inſtruction which has hither been addreſſed to women, has rather been applicable to *ladies*, if the little indirect advice, that is ſcattered through Sandford and Merton, be excepted; but, addreſſing my ſex in a firmer tone, I pay particular attention to thoſe in the middle claſs, becauſe they appear to be in the moſt natural ſtate. Perhaps the ſeeds of falſe-refinement, immorality, and vanity, have ever been ſhed by the great. Weak, artificial beings, raiſed above the common wants and affections of their race, in a premature unnatural manner, undermine the very foundation of virtue, and ſpread corruption through the whole maſs of ſociety! As a claſs of mankind they have the ſtrongeſt claim to pity; the education of the rich tends to render them vain and helpleſs, and the unfolding mind is not ſtrengthened by the practice of thoſe duties which dignify the human character.—They only live to amuſe themſelves, and by the ſame law which in nature invariably produces certain effects, they ſoon only afford barren amuſement.

But as I purpoſe taking a ſeparate view of the different ranks of ſociety, and of the moral character of women, in each, this hint is, for the preſent, ſufficient; and I have only alluded to the ſubject, becauſe it appears to me to be the very eſſence of an introduction to give a curſory account of the contents of the work it introduces.

My own ſex, I hope, will excuſe me, if I treat them like rational creatures, inſtead of flattering their *faſcinating* graces, and viewing them as if they were in a ſtate of perpetual childhood, unable to ſtand alone. I earneſtly wiſh to point out in what true dignity and human happineſs conſiſts—I wiſh to perſuade women to endeavour to acquire ſtrength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the ſoft phraſes, ſuſceptibility of heart, delicacy of ſentiment, and refinement of taſte, are almoſt ſynonymous with epithets of weakneſs, and that thoſe beings who are only the objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its ſiſter, will ſoon become objects of contempt.

Diſmiſſing then thoſe pretty feminine phraſes, which the men condeſcendingly uſe to ſoften our ſlaviſh dependence, and deſpiſing that weak elegancy of mind, exquiſite ſenſibility, and ſweet docility of manners, ſuppoſed to be the ſexual characteriſtics of the weaker veſſel, I wiſh to ſhew that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the firſt object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardleſs of the diſtinction of ſex; and that ſecondary views ſhould be brought to this ſimple touchſtone.

This is a rough ſketch of my plan; and ſhould I expreſs my conviction with the energetic emotions that I feel whenever I think of the ſubject, the dictates of experience and reflection will be felt by ſome of my readers. Animated by this important object, I ſhall diſdain to cull my phraſes or poliſh my ſtyle;—I aim at being uſeful, and ſincerity will render me unaffected; for, wiſhing rather to perſuade by the force of my arguments, than dazzle by the elegance of my language, I ſhall not waſte my time in rounding periods, nor in fabricating the turgid bombaſt of artificial

ficial feelings, which, coming from the head, never reach the heart.—I ſhall be employed about things, not words!—and, anxious to render my ſex more reſpectable members of ſociety, I ſhall try to avoid that flowery diction which has ſlided from eſſays into novels, and from novels into familiar letters and converſation.

Theſe pretty nothings—theſe caricatures of the real beauty of ſenſibility, dropping glibly from the tongue, vitiate the taſte, and create a kind of ſickly delicacy that turns away from ſimple unadorned truth; and a deluge of falſe ſentiments and overſtretched feelings, ſtifling the natural emotions of the heart, render the domeſtic pleaſures inſipid, that ought to ſweeten the exerciſe of thoſe ſevere duties, which educate a rational and immortal being for a nobler field of action.

The education of women has, of late, been more attended to than formerly; yet they are ſtill reckoned a frivolous ſex, and ridiculed or pitied by the writers who endeavour by ſatire or inſtruction to improve them. It is acknowledged that they ſpend many of the firſt years of their lives in acquiring a ſmattering of accompliſhments: meanwhile ſtrength of body and mind are ſacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the deſire of eſtabliſhing themſelves,—the only way women can riſe in the world,—by marriage. And this deſire making mere animals of them, when they marry they act as ſuch children may be expected to act:—they dreſs; they paint, and nickname God's creatures.—Surely theſe weak beings are only fit for a ſeraglio!—Can they govern a family, or take care of the poor babes whom they bring into the world?

If then it can be fairly deduced from the preſent conduct of the ſex, from the prevalent fondneſs for pleaſure which takes place of ambition and thoſe nobler paſſions that open and enlarge the ſoul; that the inſtruction which women have received has only tended, with the conſtitution of civil ſociety, to render them inſignificant objects of deſire—mere propagators of fools!—if it can be proved that in aiming to accompliſh them, without cultivating their underſtandings, they are taken out of their ſphere of duties, and made ridiculous and uſeleſs when the ſhort-lived bloom of beauty is over*, I preſume that *rational* men will excuſe me for endeavouring to perſuade them to become more maſculine and reſpectable.

Indeed the word maſculine is only a bugbear: there is little reaſon to fear that women will acquire too much courage or fortitude; for their apparent inferiority with reſpect to bodily ſtrength, muſt render them, in ſome degree, dependent on men in the various relations of life; but why ſhould it be increaſed by prejudices that give a ſex to virtue, and confound ſimple truths with ſenſual reveries?

Women are, in fact, ſo much degraded by miſtaken notions of female excellence, that I do not mean to add a paradox when I aſſert, that this artificial weakneſs produces a propenſity to tyrannize, and gives birth to cunning, the natural opponent of ſtrength, which leads them to play off thoſe contemptible infantine airs that undermine eſteem even whilſt they excite deſire. Do not foſter theſe prejudices,

and they will naturally fall into their ſubordinate, yet reſpectable ſtation, in life.

It ſeems ſcarcely neceſſary to ſay, that I now ſpeak of the ſex in general. Many individuals have more ſenſe than their male relatives; and, as nothing preponderates where there is a conſtant ſtruggle for an equilibrium, without it has naturally more gravity, ſome women govern their huſbands without degrading themſelves, becauſe intellect will always govern.

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* A lively writer, I cannot recollect his name, aſks what buſineſs women turned of forty have to do in the world?

# VINDICATION

OF THE

# RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

## PART I.

# CHAP. I.

## THE RIGHTS AND INVOLVED DUTIES OF MANKIND CONSIDERED.

In the preſent ſtate of ſociety it appears neceſſary to go back to firſt principles in ſearch of the moſt ſimple truths, and to diſpute with ſome prevailing prejudice every inch of ground. To clear my way, I muſt be allowed to aſk ſome plain queſtions, and the anſwers will probably appear as unequivocal as the axioms on which reaſoning is built; though, when entangled with various motives of action, they are formally contradicted, either by the words or conduct of men.

In what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation conſiſt? The anſwer is as clear as that a half is leſs than the whole; in Reaſon.

What acquirement exalts one being above another? Virtue; we ſpontaneouſly reply.

For what purpoſe were the paſſions implanted? That man by ſtruggling with them might attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes; whiſpers Experience.

Conſequently the perfection of our nature and capability of happineſs, muſt be eſtimated by the degree of reaſon, virtue, and knowledge, that diſtinguiſh the individual, and direct the laws which bind ſociety: and that from the exerciſe of reaſon, knowledge and virtue naturally flow, is equally undeniable, if mankind be viewed collectively.

The rights and duties of man thus ſimplified, it ſeems almoſt impertinent to attempt to illuſtrate truths that appear ſo incontrovertible; yet ſuch deeply rooted prejudices have clouded reaſon, and ſuch ſpurious qualities have aſſumed the name of virtues, that it is neceſſary to purſue the courſe of reaſon as it has been perplexed and involved in error, by various adventitious circumſtances, comparing the ſimple axiom with caſual deviations.

Men, in general, ſeem to employ their reaſon to juſtify prejudices, which they have imbibed, they cannot trace how, rather than to root them out. The mind muſt be ſtrong that reſolutely forms its own principles; for a kind of intellectual cowardice prevails which makes many men ſhrink from the taſk, or only do it by halves. Yet the imperfect concluſions thus drawn, are frequently very plauſible, becauſe they are built on partial experience, on juſt, though narrow, views.

Going back to firſt principles, vice ſkulks, with all its native deformity, from cloſe inveſtigation; but a ſet of ſhallow reaſoners are always exclaiming that theſe arguments prove too much, and that a meaſure rotten at the core may be expedient. Thus expediency is continually contraſted with ſimple principles, till truth is loſt in a miſt of words, virtue, in forms, and knowledge rendered a ſounding nothing, by the ſpecious prejudices that aſſume its name.

That the ſociety is formed in the wiſeſt manner, whoſe conſtitution is founded on the nature of man, ſtrikes, in the abſtract, every thinking being ſo forcibly, that it looks like preſumption to endeavour to bring forward proofs; though proof muſt be brought, or the ſtrong hold of preſcription will never be forced by reaſon; yet to urge preſcription as an argument to juſtify the depriving men (or women) of their natural rights, is one of the abſurd ſophiſms which daily inſult common ſenſe.

The civilization of the bulk of the people of Europe is very partial; nay, it may be made a queſtion, whether they have acquired any virtues in exchange for innocence, equivalent to the miſery produced by the vices that have been plaſtered over unſightly ignorance, and the freedom which has been bartered for ſplendid ſlavery. The deſire of dazzling by riches, the moſt certain pre-eminence that man can obtain, the pleaſure of commanding flattering ſycophants, and many other complicated low calculations of doting ſelf-love, have all contributed to overwhelm the maſs of mankind, and make liberty a convenient handle for mock patriotiſm. For whilſt rank and titles are held of the utmoſt importance, before which Genius "muſt hide its diminiſhed head," it is, with a few exceptions, very unfortunate for a nation when a man of abilities, without rank or property, puſhes himſelf forward to notice.—Alas! what unheard of miſery have thouſands ſuffered to purchaſe a cardinal's hat for

an intriguing obſcure adventurer, who longed to be ranked with princes, or lord it over them by ſeizing the triple crown!

Such, indeed, has been the wretchedneſs that has flowed from hereditary honours, riches, and monarchy, that men of lively ſenſibility have almoſt uttered blaſphemy in order to juſtify the diſpenſations of providence. Man has been held out as independent of his power who made him, or as a lawleſs planet darting from its orbit to ſteal the celeſtial fire of reaſon; and the vengeance of heaven, lurking in the ſubtile flame, ſufficiently puniſhed his temerity, by introducing evil into the world.

Impreſſed by this view of the miſery and diſorder which pervaded ſociety, and fatigued with joſtling againſt artificial fools, Rouſſeau became enamoured of ſolitude, and, being at the ſame time an optimiſt, he labours with uncommon eloquence to prove that man was naturally a ſolitary animal. Miſled by his reſpect for the goodneſs of God, who certainly—for what man of ſenſe and feeling can doubt it!—gave life only to communicate happineſs, he conſiders evil as poſitive, and the work of man; not aware that he was exalting one attribute at the expence of another, equally neceſſary to divine perfection.

Reared on a falſe hypotheſis his arguments in favour of a ſtate of nature are plauſible, but unſound. I ſay unſound; for to aſſert that a ſtate of nature is preferable to civilization, in all its poſſible perfection, is, in other words, to arraign ſupreme wiſdom; and the paradoxical exclamation, that God has made all things right, and that evil has been introduced by the creature, whom he formed, knowing what he formed, is as unphiloſophical as impious.

When that wiſe Being who created us and placed us here, ſaw the fair idea, he willed, by allowing it to be ſo, that the paſſions ſhould unfold our reaſon, becauſe he could ſee that preſent evil would produce future good. Could the helpleſs creature whom he called from nothing break looſe from his providence, and boldly learn to know good by practiſing evil, without his permiſſion? No.—How could that energetic advocate for immortality argue ſo inconſiſtently? Had mankind remained for ever in the brutal ſtate of nature, which even his magic pen cannot paint as a ſtate in which a ſingle virtue took root, it would have been clear, though not to the ſenſitive unreflecting wanderer, that man was born to run the circle of life and death, and adorn God's garden for ſome purpoſe which could not eaſily be reconciled with his attributes.

But if, to crown the whole, there were to be rational creatures produced, allowed to riſe in excellence by the exerciſe of powers implanted for that purpoſe; if benignity itſelf thought fit to call into exiſtence a creature above the brutes *, who could think and improve himſelf, why ſhould that ineſtimable gift, for a gift it was, if man was ſo created as to have a capacity to riſe above the ſtate in which ſenſation produced brutal eaſe, be called, in direct terms, a curſe? A curſe it might be reckoned, if all our exiſtence was bounded by our continuance in this world; for why ſhould the gracious fountain of life give us paſſions, and the power of reflecting, only to imbitter our days and inſpire us with miſtaken

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* Contrary to the opinion of anatomiſts, who argue by analogy from the formation of the teeth, ſtomach, and inteſtines, Rouſſeau will not allow a man to be a carnivorous animal. And, carried away from nature by a love of ſyſtem, he diſputes whether man be a gregarious animal, though the long and helpleſs ſtate of infancy ſeems to point him out as particularly impelled to pair.

miſtaken notions of dignity? Why ſhould he lead us from love of ourſelves to the ſublime emotions which the diſcovery of his wiſdom and goodneſs excites, if theſe feelings were not ſet in motion to improve our nature, of which they make a part *, and render us capable of enjoying a more godlike portion of happineſs? Firmly perſuaded that no evil exiſts in the world that God did not deſign to take place, I build my belief on the perfection of God.

Rouſſeau exerts himſelf to prove that all *was* right originally: a crowd of authors that all *is* now right: and I, that all will *be* right.

But, true to his firſt poſition, next to a ſtate of nature, Rouſſeau celebrates barbariſm, and, apoſtrophizing the ſhade of Fabricius, he forgets that, in conquering the world, the Romans never dreamed of eſtabliſhing their own liberty on a firm baſis, or of extending the reign of virtue. Eager to ſupport his ſyſtem, he ſtigmatizes, as vicious, every effort of genius; and, uttering the apotheoſis of ſavage virtues, he exalts thoſe to demi-gods, who were ſcarcely human—the brutal Spartans, who, in defiance of juſtice and gratitude, ſacrificed, in cold blood, the ſlaves who had ſhewn themſelves men to reſcue their oppreſſors.

Diſguſted with artificial manners and virtues, the citizen of Geneva, inſtead of properly ſifting the ſubject, threw away the wheat with the chaff, without waiting to inquire whether the evils which his ardent ſoul turned from indignantly, were the conſequence of civilization or the veſtiges of barbariſm. He ſaw vice trampling on virtue, and the ſemblance of goodneſs taking place of the reality; he ſaw talents bent by power to ſiniſter purpoſes, and never thought of tracing the gigantic miſchief up to arbitrary power, up to the hereditary diſtinctions that claſh with the mental ſuperiority that naturally raiſes a man above his fellows. He did

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* What would you ſay to a mechanic whom you had deſired to make a watch to point out the hour of the day, if, to ſhew his ingenuity, he added wheels to make it a repeater, &c. that perplexed the ſimple mechaniſm; ſhould he urge, to excuſe himſelf—had you not touched a certain ſpring, you would have known nothing of the matter, and that he ſhould have amuſed himſelf by making *an experiment* without doing you any harm: would you not retort fairly upon him, by inſiſting that if he had not added thoſe needleſs wheels and ſprings, the accident could not have happened?

not perceive that regal power, in a few generations, introduces idiotiſm into the noble ſtem, and holds out baits to render thouſands idle and vicious.

Nothing can ſet the regal character in a more contemptible point of view, than the various crimes that have elevated men to the ſupreme dignity.—Vile intrigues, unnatural crimes, and every vice that degrades our nature, have been the ſteps to this diſtinguiſhed eminence; yet millions of men have ſupinely allowed the nerveleſs limbs of the poſterity of ſuch rapacious prowlers to reſt quietly on their enſanguined thrones [*].

What but a peſtilential vapour can hover over ſociety when its chief director is only inſtructed in the invention of crimes, or the ſtupid rotine of childiſh ceremonies? Will men never be wiſe?—will they never ceaſe to expect corn from tares, and figs from thiſtles?

It is impoſſible for any man, when the moſt favourable circumſtances concur, to acquire ſufficient knowledge and ſtrength of mind to diſcharge the duties of a king, entruſted with uncontrouled power; how then muſt

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[*] Could there be a greater inſult offered to the rights of man than the beds of juſtice in France, when an infant was made the organ of the deteſtable Dubois!

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they be violated when his very elevation is an inſuperable bar to the attainment of either wiſdom or virtue; when all the feelings of a man are ſtifled by flattery, and reflection ſhut out by pleaſure! Surely it is madneſs to make the fate of thouſands depend on the caprice of a weak fellow creature, whoſe very ſtation ſinks him *neceſſarily* below the meaneſt of his ſubjects! But one power ſhould not be thrown down to exalt another—for all power intoxicates weak man; and its abuſe proves, that the more equality there is eſtabliſhed among men, the more virtue and happineſs will reign in ſociety. But this, and any ſimilar maxim deduced from ſimple reaſon, raiſes an outcry—the church or the ſtate is in danger, if faith in the wiſdom of antiquity is not implicit; and they who, rouſed by the ſight of human calamity, dare to attack human authority, are reviled as deſpiſers of God, and enemies of man. Theſe are bitter calumnies, yet they reached one of the beſt of men [*], whoſe aſhes ſtill preach peace, and whoſe memory demands a reſpectful pauſe, when ſubjects are diſcuſſed that lay ſo near his heart.——

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[*] Dr. Price.

After attacking the ſacred majeſty of Kings, I ſhall ſcarcely excite ſurpriſe by adding my firm perſuaſion that every profeſſion, in which great ſubordination of rank conſtitutes its power, is highly injurious to morality.

A ſtanding army, for inſtance, is incompatible with freedom; becauſe ſubordination and rigour are the very ſinews of military diſcipline; and deſpotiſm is neceſſary to give vigour to enterprizes that one will directs. A ſpirit inſpired by romantic notions of honour, a kind of morality founded on the faſhion of the age, can only be felt by a few officers, whilſt the main body muſt be moved by command, like the waves of the ſea; for the ſtrong wind of authority puſhes the crowd of ſubalterns forward, they ſcarcely know or care why, with headlong fury.

Beſides, nothing can be ſo prejudicial to the morals of the inhabitants of country towns as the occaſional reſidence of a ſet of idle ſuperficial young men, whoſe only occupation is gallantry, and whoſe poliſhed manners render vice more dangerous, by concealing its deformity under gay ornamental drapery. An air of faſhion, which is but a badge of ſlavery, and proves that the ſoul has not a ſtrong individual character, awes ſimple country people into an imitation of the vices, when they cannot catch the ſlippery graces, of politeneſs. Every corps is a chain of deſpots, who, ſubmitting and tyrannizing without exerciſing their reaſon, become dead weights of vice and folly on the community. A man of rank or fortune, ſure of riſing by intereſt, has nothing to do but to purſue ſome extravagant freak; whilſt the needy *gentleman*, who is to riſe, as the phraſe turns, by his merit, becomes a ſervile paraſite or vile pander.

Sailors, the naval gentlemen, come under the ſame deſcription, only their vices aſſume a different and a groſſer caſt. They are more poſitively indolent, when not diſcharging the ceremonials of their ſtation; whilſt the inſignificant fluttering of ſoldiers may be termed active idleneſs. More confined to the ſociety of men, the former acquire a fondneſs for humour and miſchievous tricks; whilſt the latter, mixing frequently with well-bred women, catch a ſentimental cant. —But mind is equally out of the queſtion, whether they indulge the horſe-laugh, or polite ſimper.

May I be allowed to extend the compariſon to a profeſſion where more mind is certainly to be found; for the clergy have ſuperior opportunities of improvement, though ſubordination almoſt equally cramps their faculties? The blind ſubmiſſion impoſed at college to forms of belief ſerves as a novitiate to the curate, who muſt obſequiouſly reſpect the opinion of his rector or patron, if he means to riſe in his profeſſion. Perhaps there cannot be a more forcible contraſt than between the ſervile dependent gait of a poor curate and the courtly mien of a biſhop. And the reſpect and contempt they inſpire render the diſcharge of their ſeparate functions equally uſeleſs.

It is of great importance to obſerve that the character of every man is, in ſome degree, formed by his profeſſion. A man of ſenſe may only have a caſt of countenance that wears off as you trace his individuality, whilſt the weak, common man has ſcarcely ever any character, but what belongs to the body; at leaſt, all his opinions have been ſo ſteeped in the vat conſecrated by authority,

that the faint ſpirit which the grape of his own vine yields cannot be diſtinguiſhed.

Society, therefore, as it becomes more enlightened, ſhould be very careful not to eſtabliſh bodies of men who muſt neceſſarily be made fooliſh or vicious by the very conſtitution of their profeſſion.

In the infancy of ſociety, when men were juſt emerging out of barbariſm, chiefs and prieſts, touching the moſt powerful ſprings of ſavage conduct, hope and fear, muſt have had unbounded ſway. An ariſtocracy, of courſe, is naturally the firſt form of government. But, claſhing intereſts ſoon loſing their equipoiſe, a monarchy and hierarchy break out of the confuſion of ambitious ſtruggles, and the foundation of both is ſecured by feudal tenures. This appears to be the origin of monarchical and prieſtly power, and the dawn of civilization. But ſuch combuſtible materials cannot long be pent up; and, getting vent in foreign wars and inteſtine inſurrections, the people acquire ſome power in the tumult, which obliges their rulers to gloſs over their oppreſſion with a ſhew of right. Thus, as wars, agriculture, commerce, and literature, expand the mind, deſpots are compelled, to make covert corruption hold faſt the power which was formerly ſnatched by open force*. And this baneful lurking gangrene is moſt quickly ſpread by luxury and ſuperſtition, the ſure dregs of ambition. The indolent puppet of a court firſt becomes a luxurious monſter, or faſtidious ſenſualiſt, and then makes the contagion which his unnatural ſtate ſpread, the inſtrument of tyranny.

It is the peſtiferous purple which renders the progreſs of civilization a curſe, and warps the underſtanding, till men of ſenſibility doubt whether the expanſion of intellect produces a greater portion of happineſs or miſery. But the nature of the poiſon points out the antidote; and had Rouſſeau mounted one ſtep higher in his inveſtigation, or could his eye have pierced through the foggy atmoſphere, which he almoſt diſdained to

breathe, his active mind would have darted forward to contemplate the perfection of man in the eſtabliſhment of true civilization, inſtead of taking his ferocious flight back to the night of ſenſual ignorance.

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* Men of abilities ſcatter ſeeds that grow up and have a great influence on the forming opinion; and when once the public opinion preponderates, through the exertion of reaſon, the overthrow of arbitrary power is not very diſtant.

## CHAP. II.

### THE PREVAILING OPINION OF A SEXUAL CHARACTER DISCUSSED.

To account for, and excuſe the tyranny of man, many ingenious arguments have been brought forward to prove, that the two ſexes, in the acquirement of virtue, ought to aim at attaining a very different character: or, to ſpeak explicitly, women are not allowed to have ſufficient ſtrength of mind to acquire what really deſerves the name of virtue. Yet it ſhould ſeem, allowing them to have ſouls, that there is but one way appointed by Providence to lead *mankind* to either virtue or happineſs.

If then women are not a ſwarm of ephemeron triflers, why ſhould they be kept in ignorance under the ſpecious name of innocence? Men complain, and with reaſon, of the follies and caprices of our ſex, when they do not keenly ſatirize our headſtrong paſſions and groveling vices. —Behold, I ſhould anſwer, the natural effect of ignorance! The mind will ever be unſtable that has only prejudices to reſt on, and the current will run with deſtructive fury when there are no barriers to break its force. Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakneſs, juſtly termed cunning, ſoftneſs of temper, *outward* obedience, and a ſcrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and ſhould they be beautiful, every thing elſe is needleſs, for, at leaſt, twenty years of their lives.

Thus Milton deſcribes our firſt frail mother; though when he tells us that women are formed for ſoftneſs and ſweet attractive grace, I cannot comprehend his meaning, unleſs, in the true Mahometan ſtrain, he meant to deprive us of ſouls, and inſinuate that we were beings only deſigned by ſweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the ſenſes of man when he can no longer ſoar on the wing of contemplation.

How groſsly do they inſult us who thus adviſe us only to render ourſelves gentle, domeſtic brutes! For inſtance, the winning ſoftneſs ſo warmly, and frequently, recommended, that governs by obeying. What childiſh expreſſions, and how inſignificant is the being—can it be an immortal one? who will condeſcend to govern by ſuch ſiniſter methods! ‘Certainly, ſays Lord Bacon, ‘man is of kin to the ‘beaſts by his body; and if he be not of kin ‘to God by his ſpirit, he is a baſe and ignoble creature!’ Men, indeed, appear to me to act in a very unphiloſophical manner when they try to ſecure the good conduct of women by attempting to keep them always in a ſtate of childhood. Rouſſeau was more conſiſtent when he wiſhed to ſtop the progreſs of reaſon in both ſexes, for if men eat of the tree of knowledge, women will come in for a taſte; but, from the imperfect cultivation which their underſtandings now receive, they only attain a knowledge of evil.

Children, I grant, ſhould be innocent; but when the epithet is applied to men, or women, it is but a civil term for weakneſs. For if it be allowed that women were deſtined by Providence to acquire human virtues, and by the exerciſe of their underſtandings, that ſtability of character which is the firmeſt ground to reſt our future hopes upon, they muſt be permitted to turn to the fountain of light, and not forced to ſhape their courſe by the twinkling of a mere ſatellite. Milton, I grant, was of a very different opinion; for he only bends to the indefeaſible right of beauty, though it would be difficult to render two paſſages which I now mean to contraſt, conſiſtent. But into ſimilar inconſiſtencies are great men often led by their ſenſes.

‘To whom thus Eve with *perfect beauty* adorn'd.
‘My Author and Diſpoſer, what thou bidſt
‘*Unargued* I obey; ſo God ordains;
‘God is *thy law, thou mine:* to know no more
‘Is Woman's *happieſt* knowledge and her *praiſe*.’

Theſe are exactly the arguments that I have uſed to children; but I have added, your reaſon is now gaining ſtrength, and, till it arrives at ſome degree of maturity, you muſt look up to me for advice—then you ought to *think*, and only rely on God.

Yet in the following lines Milton ſeems to coincide with me; when he makes Adam thus expoſtulate with his Maker.

‘Haſt thou not made me here thy ſubſtitute,
‘And theſe inferior far beneath me ſet?

‘ Among *unequals* what ſociety
‘ Can ſort, what harmony or true delight?
‘ Which muſt be mutual, in proportion due
‘ Giv’n and receiv’d; but in *diſparity*
‘ The one intenſe, the other ſtill remiſs
‘ Cannot well ſuit with either, but ſoon prove
‘ Tedious alike: of *fellowſhip* I ſpeak
‘ Such as I ſeek, fit to participate
‘ All rational delight—

In treating, therefore, of the manners of women, let us, diſregarding ſenſual arguments, trace what we ſhould endeavour to make them in order to co-operate, if the expreſſion be not too bold, with the ſupreme Being.

By individual education, I mean, for the ſenſe of the word is not preciſely defined, ſuch an attention to a child as will ſlowly ſharpen the ſenſes, form the temper, regulate the paſſions, as they begin to ferment, and ſet the underſtanding to work before the body arrives at maturity; ſo that the man may only have to proceed, not to begin, the important taſk of learning to think and reaſon.

To prevent any miſconſtruction, I muſt add, that I do not believe that a private education can work the wonders which ſome ſanguine writers have attributed to it. Men and women muſt be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the ſociety they live in. In every age there has been a ſtream of popular opinion that has carried all before it, and given a family character, as it were, to the century. It may then fairly be inferred, that, till ſociety be differently conſtituted, much cannot be expected from education. It is, however, ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe to aſſert, that, whatever effect circumſtances have on the abilities, every being may become virtuous by the exerciſe of its own reaſon; for if but one being was created with vicious inclinations, that is poſitively bad, what can ſave us from atheiſm? or if we worſhip a God, is not that God a devil?

Conſequently, the moſt perfect education, in my opinion, is ſuch an exerciſe of the underſtanding as is beſt calculated to ſtrengthen the body and form the heart. Or, in other words, to enable the individual to attain ſuch habits of virtue as will render it independent. In fact, it is a farce to call any being virtuous whoſe virtues do not reſult from the exerciſe of its own reaſon. This was Rouſſeau’s opinion reſpecting men: I extend it to women, and confidently aſſert that they have been drawn out of their ſphere by falſe refinement, and not by an endeavour to acquire maſculine qualities. Still the regal homage which they receive is ſo intoxicating, that till the manners of the times are changed, and formed on more reaſonable principles, it may be impoſſible to convince them that the illegitimate power which they obtain, by degrading themſelves, is a curſe, and that they muſt return to nature and equality, if they wiſh to ſecure the placid ſatiſfaction that unſophiſticated affections impart. But for this epoch we muſt wait—wait, perhaps, till kings and nobles, enlightened by reaſon, and, preferring the real dignity of man to childiſh ſtate, throw off their gaudy hereditary trappings: and if then women do not reſign the arbitrary power of beauty—they will prove that they have *leſs* mind than man.

I may be accuſed of arrogance; ſtill I muſt declare, what I firmly believe, that all the writers who have written on the ſubject of female education and manners, from Rouſſeau to Dr. Gregory, have contributed to render women more artificial, weak characters, than they would otherwiſe have been; and, conſequently, more uſeleſs members of ſociety. I might have expreſſed this conviction in a lower key; but I am afraid it would have been the whine of affectation, and not the faithful expreſſion of my feelings, of the clear reſult, which experience and reflection have led me to draw. When I come to that diviſion of the ſubject, I ſhall advert to the paſſages that I more particularly diſapprove of, in the works of the authors I have juſt alluded to; but it is firſt neceſſary to obſerve, that my objection extends to the whole purport of thoſe books, which tend, in my opinion, to degrade one half of the human ſpecies, and render women pleaſing at the expence of every ſolid virtue.

Though, to reaſon on Rouſſeau's ground, if man did attain a degree of perfection of mind when his body arrived at maturity, it might be proper, in order to make a man and his wife *one*, that ſhe ſhould rely entirely on his underſtanding; and the graceful ivy, claſping the oak that ſupported it, would form a whole in which ſtrength and beauty would be equally conſpicuous. But, alas! huſbands, as well as their helpmates, are often only overgrown children; nay, thanks to early debauchery, ſcarcely men in their outward form—and if the blind lead the blind, one need not come from heaven to tell us the conſequence.

Many are the cauſes that, in the preſent corrupt ſtate of ſociety, contribute to enſlave women by cramping their underſtandings and ſharpening their ſenſes. One, perhaps, that ſilently does more miſchief than all the reſt, is their diſregard of order.

To do every thing in an orderly manner, is a moſt important precept, which women, who, generally ſpeaking, receive only a diſorderly kind of education, ſeldom attend to with that degree of exactneſs that men, who from their infancy are broken into method, obſerve. This negligent kind of gueſs-work, for what other epithet can be uſed to point out the random exertions of a ſort of inſtinctive common ſenſe, never brought to the teſt of reaſon? prevents their generalizing matters of fact—ſo they do to-day, what they did yeſterday, merely becauſe they did it yeſterday.

This contempt of the underſtanding in early life has more baneful conſequences than is commonly ſuppoſed; for the little knowledge which women of ſtrong minds attain, is, from various circumſtances, of a more deſultory kind than the knowledge of men, and it is acquired more by ſheer obſervations on real life, than from comparing what has been individually obſerved with the reſults of experience generalized by ſpeculation. Led by their dependent ſituation and domeſtic employments more into ſociety, what they learn is rather by ſnatches; and as learning is with them, in general, only a ſecondary thing, they do not purſue any one branch with that perſevering ardour neceſſary to give vigour to the faculties, and clearneſs to the judgment. In the preſent ſtate of ſociety, a little learning is required to ſupport the character of a gentleman; and boys are obliged to ſubmit to a few years of diſcipline. But in the education of women, the cultivation of the underſtanding is always ſubordinate to the acquirement of ſome corporeal accompliſhment; even while enervated by confinement and falſe notions of modeſty, the body is prevented from attaining that grace and beauty which relaxed half-formed limbs never exhibit. Beſides, in youth their faculties are not brought forward by emulation; and having no ſerious ſcientific ſtudy, if they have natural ſagacity it is turned too ſoon on life and manners. They dwell on effects, and modifications, without tracing them back to cauſes; and complicated rules to adjuſt behaviour, are a weak ſubſtitute for ſimple principles.

As a proof that education gives this appearance of weakneſs to females, we may inſtance the example of military men, who are, like them, ſent into the world before their minds have been ſtored with knowledge or fortified by principles. The conſequences are ſimilar; ſoldiers acquire a little ſuperficial knowledge, ſnatched from the muddy current of converſation, and, from continually mixing with ſociety, they gain, what is termed a knowledge of the world; and this acquaintance with manners and cuſtoms has frequently been confounded with a knowledge of the human heart. But can the crude fruit of caſual obſervation, never brought to the teſt of judgment, formed by comparing ſpeculation and experience, deſerve ſuch a diſtinction? Soldiers, as well as women, practiſe the minor virtues with punctilious politeneſs. Where is then the ſexual difference, when the education has been the ſame? All the difference that I can diſcern, ariſes from the ſuperior advantage of liberty, which enables the former to ſee more of life.

It is wandering from my preſent ſubject, perhaps,

perhaps, to make a political remark; but, as it was produced naturally by the train of my reflections, I ſhall not paſs it ſilently over.

Standing armies can never conſiſt of reſolute, robuſt men; they may be well diſciplined machines, but they will ſeldom contain men under the influence of ſtrong paſſions, or with very vigorous faculties. And as for any depth of underſtanding, I will venture to affirm, that it is as rarely to be found in the army as amongſt women; and the cauſe, I maintain, is the ſame. It may be further obſerved, that officers are alſo particularly attentive to their perſons, fond of dancing, crowded rooms, adventures, and ridicule*. Like the *fair* ſex, the buſineſs of their lives is gallantry.—They were taught to pleaſe, and they only live to pleaſe. Yet they do not loſe their rank in the diſtinction of ſexes, for they are ſtill reckoned ſuperior to women, though in what their ſuperiority conſiſts, beyond what I have juſt mentioned, it is difficult to diſcover.

The great misfortune is this, that they

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* Why ſhould women be cenſured with petulant acrimony, becauſe they ſeem to have a paſſion for a ſcarlet coat? Has not education placed them more on a level with ſoldiers than any other claſs of men?

both acquire manners before morals, and a knowledge of life before they have, from reflection, any acquaintance with the grand ideal outline of human nature. The conſequence is natural; ſatisfied with common nature, they become a prey to prejudices, and taking all their opinions on credit, they blindly ſubmit to authority. So that, if they have any ſenſe, it is a kind of inſtinctive glance, that catches proportions, and decides with reſpect to manners; but fails when arguments are to be purſued below the ſurface, or opinions analyzed.

May not the ſame remark be applied to women? Nay, the argument may be carried ſtill further, for they are both thrown out of a uſeful ſtation by the unnatural diſtinctions eſtabliſhed in civilized life. Riches and hereditary honours have made cyphers of women to give conſequence to the numerical figure; and idleneſs has produced a mixture of gallantry and deſpotiſm into ſociety, which leads the very men who are the ſlaves of their miſtreſſes to tyrannize over their ſiſters, wives, and daughters. This is only keeping them in rank and file, it is true. Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience; but, as blind obedience is ever

ſought for by power, tyrants and ſenſualiſts are in the right when they endeavour to keep women in the dark, becauſe the former only want ſlaves, and the latter a play-thing. The ſenſualiſt, indeed, has been the moſt dangerous of tyrants, and women have been duped by their lovers, as princes by their miniſters, whilſt dreaming that they reigned over them.

I now principally allude to Rouſſeau, for his character of Sophia is, undoubtedly, a captivating one, though it appears to me groſsly unnatural; however, it is not the ſuperſtructure, but the foundation of her character, the principles on which her education was built, that I mean to attack; nay, warmly as I admire the genius of that able writer, whoſe opinions I ſhall often have occaſion to cite, indignation always takes place of admiration, and the rigid frown of inſulted virtue effaces the ſmile of complacency, which his eloquent periods are wont to raiſe, when I read his voluptuous reveries. Is this the man, who, in his ardour for virtue, would baniſh all the ſoft arts of peace, and almoſt carry us back to Spartan diſcipline? Is this the man who delights to paint the uſeful ſtruggles of paſſion, the triumphs of good diſpoſitions, and the heroic flights which carry the glowing ſoul out of itſelf?—How are theſe mighty ſentiments lowered when he deſcribes the pretty foot and enticing airs of his little favourite! But, for the preſent, I wave the ſubject, and, inſtead of ſeverely reprehending the tranſient effuſions of overweening ſenſibility, I ſhall only obſerve, that whoever has caſt a benevolent eye on ſociety, muſt often have been gratified by the ſight of humble mutual love, not dignified by ſentiment, nor ſtrengthened by a union in intellectual purſuits. The domeſtic trifles of the day have afforded matter for cheerful converſe, and innocent careſſes have ſoftened toils which did not require great exerciſe of mind or ſtretch of thought: yet, has not the ſight of this moderate felicity excited more tenderneſs than reſpect? An emotion ſimilar to what we feel when children are playing, or animals ſporting *, whilſt the contemplation of the noble ſtruggles of ſuffering merit has raiſed admiration, and carried our thoughts to that world where ſenſation will give place to reaſon.

Women are, therefore, to be conſidered either as moral beings, or ſo weak that they muſt be entirely ſubjected to the ſuperior faculties of men.

Let us examine this queſtion. Rouſſeau declares that a woman ſhould never, for a moment, feel herſelf independent, that ſhe ſhould be governed by fear to exerciſe her *natural* cunning, and made a coquetiſh ſlave in order to render her a more alluring object of deſire, a *ſweeter* companion to man, whenever he chooſes to relax himſelf. He carries the arguments, which he pretends to draw from the indications of nature, ſtill further, and inſinuates that truth and fortitude, the corner ſtones of all human virtue, ſhould be cultivated with certain reſtrictions, becauſe, with reſpect to the female character, obedience is the grand leſſon which ought to be impreſſed with unrelenting rigour.

What nonſenſe! when will a great man ariſe with ſufficient ſtrength of mind to puff

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* Similar feelings has Milton's pleaſing picture of paradiſaical happineſs ever raiſed in my mind; yet, inſtead of envying the lovely pair, I have, with conſcious dignity, or Satanic pride, turned to hell for ſublimer objects. In the ſame ſtyle, when viewing ſome noble monument of human art, I have traced the emanation of the Deity in the order I admired, till, deſcending from that giddy height, I have caught myſelf contemplating the grandeſt of all human ſights;—for fancy quickly placed, in ſome ſolitary receſs, an outcaſt of fortune, riſing ſuperior to paſſion and diſcontent.

away the fumes which pride and ſenſuality have thus ſpread over the ſubject! If women are by nature inferior to men, their virtues muſt be the ſame in quality, if not in degree, or virtue is a relative idea; conſequently, their conduct ſhould be founded on the ſame principles, and have the ſame aim.

Connected with man as daughters, wives, and mothers, their moral character may be eſtimated by their manner of fulfilling thoſe ſimple duties; but the end, the grand end of their exertions ſhould be to unfold their own faculties and acquire the dignity of conſcious virtue. They may try to render their road pleaſant; but ought never to forget, in common with man, that life yields not the felicity which can ſatisfy an immortal ſoul. I do not mean to inſinuate, that either ſex ſhould be ſo loſt in abſtract reflections or diſtant views, as to forget the affections and duties that lie before them, and are, in truth, the means appointed to produce the fruit of life; on the contrary, I would warmly recommend them, even while I aſſert, that they afford moſt ſatisfaction when they are conſidered in their true ſubordinate light.

Probably the prevailing opinion, that woman was created for man, may have taken its rise from Moſes's poetical ſtory; yet, as very few, it is preſumed, who have beſtowed any ſerious thought on the ſubject, ever ſuppoſed that Eve was, literally ſpeaking, one of Adam's ribs, the deduction muſt be allowed to fall to the ground; or, only be ſo far admitted as it proves that man, from the remoteſt antiquity, found it convenient to exert his ſtrength to ſubjugate his companion, and his invention to ſhew that ſhe ought to have her neck bent under the yoke; becauſe ſhe, as well as the brute creation, was created to do his pleaſure.

Let it not be concluded that I wiſh to invert the order of things; I have already granted, that, from the conſtitution of their bodies, men ſeem to be deſigned by Providence to attain a greater degree of virtue. I ſpeak collectively of the whole ſex; but I ſee not the ſhadow of a reaſon to conclude that their virtues ſhould differ in reſpect to their nature. In fact, how can they, if virtue has only one eternal ſtandard? I muſt therefore, if I reaſon conſequentially, as ſtrenuouſly maintain that they have the ſame ſimple direction, as that there is a God.

It follows then that cunning ſhould not be oppoſed to wiſdom, little cares to great exertions, nor inſipid ſoftneſs, varniſhed over with the name of gentleneſs, to that fortitude which grand views alone can inſpire.

I ſhall be told that woman would then loſe many of her peculiar graces, and the opinion of a well known poet might be quoted to refute my unqualified aſſertion. For Pope has ſaid, in the name of the whole male ſex,

> 'Yet ne'er ſo ſure our paſſion to create,
> 'As when ſhe touch'd the brink of all we hate.'

In what light this ſally places men and women, I ſhall leave to the judicious to determine; meanwhile I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving, that I cannot diſcover why, unleſs they are mortal, females ſhould always be degraded by being made ſubſervient to love or luſt.

To ſpeak diſreſpectfully of love is, I know, high treaſon againſt ſentiment and fine feelings; but I wiſh to ſpeak the ſimple language of truth, and rather to addreſs the head than the heart. To endeavour to reaſon love out of the world, would be to out Quixote Cervantes, and equally offend againſt common ſenſe; but an endeavour to reſtrain this tumultuous paſſion, and to prove that it ſhould not be allowed to dethrone ſuperior powers, or to uſurp the ſceptre which the underſtanding ſhould ever coolly wield, appears leſs wild.

Youth is the ſeaſon for love in both ſexes; but in thoſe days of thoughtleſs enjoyment proviſion ſhould be made for the more important years of life, when reflection takes place of ſenſation. But Rouſſeau, and moſt of the male writers who have followed his ſteps, have warmly inculcated that the whole tendency of female education ought to be directed to one point:—to render them pleaſing.

Let me reaſon with the ſupporters of this opinion who have any knowledge of human nature, do they imagine that marriage can eradicate the habitude of life? The woman who has only been taught to pleaſe will ſoon find that her charms are oblique ſunbeams, and that they cannot have much effect on her huſband's heart when they are ſeen every day, when the ſummer is paſſed and gone. Will ſhe then have ſufficient native energy to look into herſelf for comfort, and cultivate her dormant faculties? or, is it not more rational to expect that ſhe will try to pleaſe other men; and, in the emotions raiſed by the expectation of new conqueſts, endeavour to forget the mortification her love or pride has received? When the huſband ceaſes to be a lover—and the time will inevitably come, her deſire of pleaſing will then grow languid, or become a ſpring of bitterneſs; and love, perhaps, the moſt evaneſcent of all paſſions, gives place to jealouſy or vanity.

I now ſpeak of women who are reſtrained by principle or prejudice; ſuch women, though they would ſhrink from an intrigue with real abhorrence, yet, nevertheleſs, wiſh to be convinced by the homage of gallantry that they are cruelly neglected by their huſbands; or, days and weeks are ſpent in dreaming of the happineſs enjoyed by congenial ſouls, till the health is undermined and the ſpirits broken by diſcontent. How then can the great art of pleaſing be ſuch a neceſſary ſtudy? it is only uſeful to a miſtreſs; the chaſte wife, and ſerious mother, ſhould only conſider her power to pleaſe as the poliſh of her virtues, and the affection of her huſband as one of the comforts that render her taſk leſs difficult and her life happier.—But, whether ſhe be loved or neglected, her firſt wiſh ſhould be to make herſelf reſpectable, and not to rely for all her happineſs on a being ſubject to like infirmities with herſelf.

The amiable Dr. Gregory fell into a ſimilar error. I reſpect his heart; but entirely diſapprove of his celebrated Legacy to his Daughters.

He adviſes them to cultivate a fondneſs for dreſs, becauſe a fondneſs for dreſs, he aſſerts, is natural to them. I am unable to comprehend what either he or Rouſſeau mean, when they frequently uſe this indefinite term. If they told us that in a pre-exiſtent ſtate the ſoul was fond of dreſs, and brought this inclination with it into a new body, I ſhould liſten to them with a half ſmile, as I often do when I hear a rant about innate elegance.—But if he only meant to ſay that the exerciſe of the faculties will produce this fondneſs—I deny it.—It is not natural; but ariſes, like falſe ambition in men, from a love of power.

Dr. Gregory goes much further; he actually recommends diſſimulation, and adviſes an innocent girl to give the lie to her feelings, and not dance with ſpirit, when gaiety of heart would make her feet eloquent without making her geſtures immodeſt. In the name of truth and common ſenſe, why ſhould not one woman acknowledge that ſhe can take more exerciſe than another? or, in other words, that ſhe has a ſound conſtitution; and why, to damp innocent vivacity, is ſhe darkly to be told that men will draw concluſions which ſhe little thinks of?—Let the libertine draw what inference he pleaſes; but, I hope, that no ſenſible mother will reſtrain the natural frankneſs of youth by inſtilling ſuch indecent cautions. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh; and a wiſer than Solomon hath ſaid, that the heart ſhould be made clean, and not trivial ceremonies obſerved, which it is not very difficult to fulfil with ſcrupulous exactneſs when vice reigns in the heart.

Women ought to endeavour to purify their heart; but can they do ſo when their uncultivated underſtandings make them entirely dependent on their ſenſes for employment and amuſement, when no noble purſuit ſets them above the little vanities of the day, or enables them to curb the wild emotions that agitate a reed over which every paſſing breeze has power? To gain the affections of a virtuous man is affectation neceſſary? Nature has given woman a weaker frame than man; but, to enſure her huſband's affections, muſt a wife, who by the exerciſe of her mind and body whilſt ſhe was diſcharging the duties of a daughter, wife, and mother, has allowed her conſtitution to retain its natural ſtrength, and her nerves a healthy tone, is ſhe, I ſay, to condeſcend to uſe art and feign a ſickly delicacy in order to ſecure her huſband's affection? Weakneſs may excite tenderneſs, and gratify the arrogant pride of man; but the lordly careſſes of a protector will not gratify a noble mind that pants for, and deſerves to be reſpected. Fondneſs is a poor ſubſtitute for friendſhip!

In a ſeraglio, I grant, that all theſe arts are neceſſary; the epicure muſt have his palate tickled, or he will ſink into apathy; but have women ſo little ambition as to be ſatiſfied with ſuch a condition? Can they ſupinely dream life away in the lap of pleaſure, or the languor of wearineſs, rather than aſſert their claim to purſue reaſonable pleaſures and render themſelves conſpicuous by practiſing the virtues which dignify mankind? Surely ſhe has not an immortal ſoul who can loiter life away merely employed to adorn her perſon, that ſhe may amuſe the languid hours, and ſoften the cares of a fellow-creature who is willing to be enlivened by her ſmiles and tricks, when the ſerious buſineſs of life is over.

Beſides, the woman who ſtrengthens her body and exerciſes her mind will, by managing her family and practiſing various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her huſband, and if ſhe deſerves his regard by poſſeſſing ſuch ſubſtantial qualities, ſhe will not find it neceſſary to conceal her affection, nor to pretend to an unnatural coldneſs of conſtitution to excite her huſband's paſſions. In fact, if we revert to hiſtory, we ſhall find that the women who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves have neither been the moſt beautiful nor the moſt gentle of their ſex.

Nature, or, to ſpeak with ſtrict propriety, God, has made all things right; but man has ſought him out many inventions to mar the work. I now allude to that part of Dr. Gregory's treatiſe, where he adviſes a wife never to let her huſband know the extent of her ſenſibility or affection. Voluptuous precaution, and as ineffectual as abſurd.—Love, from its very nature, muſt be tranſitory. To

ſeek for a ſecret that would render it conſtant, would be as wild a ſearch as for the philoſopher's ſtone, or the grand panacea: and the diſcovery would be equally uſeleſs, or rather pernicious, to mankind. The moſt holy band of ſociety is friendſhip. It has been well ſaid, by a ſhrewd ſatiriſt, " that rare as true love is, true friendſhip is ſtill rarer."

This is an obvious truth, and the cauſe not lying deep, will not elude a ſlight glance of inquiry.

Love, the common paſſion, in which chance and ſenſation take place of choice and reaſon, is, in ſome degree, felt by the maſs of mankind; for it is not neceſſary to ſpeak, at preſent, of the emotions that riſe above or ſink below love. This paſſion, naturally increaſed by ſuſpenſe and difficulties, draws the mind out of its accuſtomed ſtate, and exalts the affections; but the ſecurity of marriage, allowing the fever of love to ſubſide, a healthy temperature is thought inſipid, only by thoſe who have not ſufficient intellect to ſubſtitute the calm tenderneſs of friendſhip, the confidence of reſpect, inſtead of blind admiration, and the ſenſual emotions of fondneſs.

This is, muſt be, the courſe of nature:—friendſhip or indifference inevitably ſucceeds love.—And this conſtitution ſeems perfectly to harmonize with the ſyſtem of government which prevails in the moral world. Paſſions are ſpurs to action, and open the mind; but they ſink into mere appetites, become a perſonal and momentary gratification, when the object is gained, and the ſatisfied mind reſts in enjoyment. The man who had ſome virtue whilſt he was ſtruggling for a crown, often becomes a voluptuous tyrant when it graces his brow; and, when the lover is not loſt in the huſband, the dotard, a prey to childiſh caprices, and fond jealouſies, neglects the ſerious duties of life, and the careſſes which ſhould excite confidence in his children are laviſhed on the overgrown child, his wife.

In order to fulfil the duties of life, and to be able to purſue with vigour the various employments which form the moral character, a maſter and miſtreſs of a family ought not to continue to love each other with paſſion. I mean to ſay, that they ought not to indulge thoſe emotions which diſturb the order of ſociety, and engroſs the thoughts that ſhould be otherwiſe employed. The mind that has never been engroſſed by one object wants vigour—if it can long be ſo, it is weak.

A miſtaken education, a narrow, uncultivated mind, and many ſexual prejudices, tend to make women more conſtant than men; but, for the preſent, I ſhall not touch on this branch of the ſubject. I will go ſtill further, and advance, without dreaming of a paradox, that an unhappy marriage is often very advantageous to a family, and that the neglected wife is, in general, the beſt mother. And this would almoſt always be the conſequence if the female mind was more enlarged: for, it ſeems to be the common diſpenſation of Providence, that what we gain in preſent enjoyment ſhould be deducted from the treaſure of life, experience; and that when we are gathering the flowers of the day and revelling in pleaſure, the ſolid fruit of toil and wiſdom ſhould not be caught at the ſame time. The way lies before us, we muſt turn to the right or left; and he who will paſs life away in bounding from one pleaſure to another, muſt not complain if he neither acquires wiſdom nor reſpectability of character.

Suppoſing, for a moment, that the ſoul is not immortal, and that man was only created for the preſent ſcene,—I think we ſhould have reaſon to complain that love, infantine fondneſs, ever grew inſipid and palled upon the ſenſe. Let us eat, drink, and love, for to-morrow we die, would be, in fact, the language of reaſon, the morality of life; and who but a fool would part with a reality for a fleeting ſhadow? But, if awed by obſerving the improvable powers of the mind, we diſdain to confine our wiſhes or thoughts to ſuch a comparatively mean field of action; that only appears grand and important, as it is connected with a boundleſs proſpect and ſublime hopes, what neceſſity is there for falſehood in conduct, and why muſt the ſacred majeſty of truth be violated to detain a deceitful good that ſaps the very foundation of virtue? Why muſt the female mind be tainted by coquetiſh arts to gratify the ſenſualiſt, and prevent love from ſubſiding into friendſhip, or compaſſionate tenderneſs, when there are not qualities on which friendſhip can be built? Let the honeſt heart ſhew itſelf, and *reaſon* teach paſſion to ſubmit to neceſſity; or, let the dignified purſuit of virtue and knowledge raiſe the mind above thoſe emotions which rather imbitter than ſweeten the cup of life, when they are not reſtrained within due bounds.

I do not mean to allude to the romantic paſſion, which is the concomitant of genius. —Who can clip its wing? But that grand paſſion not proportioned to the puny enjoyments of life, is only true to the ſentiment, and feeds on itſelf. The paſſions which have been celebrated for their durability have always been unfortunate. They have acquired ſtrength by abſence and conſtitutional melancholy.—The fancy has hovered round a form of beauty dimly ſeen—but familiarity might have turned admiration into diſguſt; or, at leaſt, into indifference, and allowed the imagination leiſure to ſtart freſh game. With perfect propriety, according to this view of things, does Rouſſeau make the miſtreſs of his ſoul, Eloiſa, love St. Preux, when life was fading before her; but this is no proof of the immortality of the paſſion.

Of the ſame complexion is Dr. Gregory's advice reſpecting delicacy of ſentiment, which he adviſes a woman not to acquire, if ſhe has determined to marry. This determination, however, perfectly conſiſtent with his former advice, he calls *indelicate*, and earneſtly perſuades his daughters to conceal it, though it may govern their conduct: as if it were indelicate to have the common appetites of human nature.

Noble morality! and conſiſtent with the cautious prudence of a little ſoul that cannot extend its views beyond the preſent minute diviſion of exiſtence. If all the faculties of woman's mind are only to be cultivated as they reſpect her dependence on man; if, when ſhe obtains a huſband ſhe has arrived at her goal, and meanly proud is ſatisfied with ſuch a paltry crown, let her grovel contentedly, ſcarcely raiſed by her employments above the animal kingdom; but, if ſhe is ſtruggling for the prize of her high calling, let her cultivate her underſtanding without ſtopping to conſider what character the huſband may have whom ſhe is deſtined to marry. Let her only determine, without being too anxious about preſent happineſs, to acquire the qualities that ennoble a rational being, and a rough inelegant huſband may ſhock her taſte without deſtroying her peace of mind. She will not model her ſoul to ſuit the frailties of

her companion, but to bear with them: his character may be a trial, but not an impediment to virtue.

If Dr. Gregory confined his remark to romantic expectations of conſtant love and congenial feelings, he ſhould have recollected that experience will baniſh what advice can never make us ceaſe to wiſh for, when the imagination is kept alive at the expence of reaſon.

I own it frequently happens that women who have foſtered a romantic unnatural delicacy of feeling, waſte their * lives in *imagining* how happy they ſhould have been with a huſband who could love them with a fervid increaſing affection every day, and all day. But they might as well pine married as ſingle—and would not be a jot more unhappy with a bad huſband than longing for a good one. That a proper education; or, to ſpeak with more preciſion, a well ſtored mind, would enable a woman to ſupport a ſingle life with dignity, I grant; but that ſhe ſhould avoid cultivating her taſte, leſt her huſband ſhould occaſionally ſhock it, is quitting a ſubſtance for a ſhadow. To ſay the truth, I do not know of what uſe is an improved taſte, if the individual is not rendered more independent of the caſualties of life; if new ſources of enjoyment, only dependent on the ſolitary operations of the mind, are not opened. People of taſte, married or ſingle, without diſtinction, will ever be diſguſted by various things that touch not leſs obſerving minds. On this concluſion the argument muſt not be allowed to hinge; but in the whole ſum of enjoyment is taſte to be denominated a bleſſing?

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* For example, the herd of noveliſts.

The queſtion is, whether it procures moſt pain or pleaſure? The anſwer will decide the propriety of Dr. Gregory's advice, and ſhew how abſurd and tyrannic it is thus to lay down a ſyſtem of ſlavery; or to attempt to educate moral beings by any other rules than thoſe deduced from pure reaſon, which apply to the whole ſpecies.

Gentleneſs of manners, forbearance and long-ſuffering, are ſuch amiable Godlike qualities, that in ſublime poetic ſtrains the Deity has been inveſted with them; and, perhaps, no repreſentation of his goodneſs ſo ſtrongly faſtens on the human affections as thoſe that repreſent him abundant in mercy and willing to pardon. Gentleneſs, conſidered in this point of view, bears on its front all the characteriſtics of grandeur, combined with the winning graces of condeſcenſion; but what a different aſpect it aſſumes when it is the ſubmiſſive demeanour of dependence, the ſupport of weakneſs that loves, becauſe it wants protection; and is forbearing, becauſe it muſt ſilently endure injuries; ſmiling under the laſh at which it dare not ſnarl. Abject as this picture appears, it is the portrait of an accompliſhed woman, according to the received opinion of female excellence, ſeparated by ſpecious reaſoners from human excellence. Or, they * kindly reſtore the rib, and make one moral being of a man and woman; not forgetting to give her all the 'ſubmiſſive charms.'

How women are to exiſt in that ſtate where there is to be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, we are not told. For though moraliſts have agreed that the tenor of life ſeems to prove that *man* is prepared by various circumſtances for a future ſtate, they conſtantly concur in adviſing *woman* only to provide for the preſent. Gentleneſs, docility, and a ſpaniel-like affection are, on this ground, conſiſtently recommended as the cardinal virtues of the ſex; and, diſregarding the arbitrary economy of nature, one writer has declared that it is maſculine for a woman to be melancholy. She was created to be the toy of man, his rattle, and it muſt jingle in his ears whenever, diſmiſſing reaſon, he chooſes to be amuſed.

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* Vide Rouſſeau, and Swedenborg.

To recommend gentleneſs, indeed, on a broad baſis is ſtrictly philoſophical. A frail being ſhould labour to be gentle. But when forbearance confounds right and wrong, it ceaſes to be a virtue; and, however convenient it may be found in a companion—that companion will ever be conſidered as an inferior, and only inſpire a vapid tenderneſs, which eaſily degenerates into contempt. Still, if advice could really make a being gentle, whoſe natural diſpoſition admitted not of ſuch a fine poliſh, ſomething towards the advancement of order would be attained; but if, as might quickly be demonſtrated, only affectation be produced by this indiſcriminate counſel, which throws a ſtumbling-block in the way of gradual improvement, and true melioration of temper, the ſex is not much benefited by ſacrificing ſolid virtues to the attainment of ſuperficial graces, though for a few years they may procure the individuals regal ſway.

As a philoſopher, I read with indignation the plauſible epithets which men uſe to ſoften their inſults; and, as a moraliſt, I aſk what is meant by ſuch heterogeneous aſſociations, as fair defects, amiable weakneſſes, &c.? If there is but one criterion of morals, but one archetype for man, women appear to be ſuſpended by deſtiny, according to the vulgar tale of Mahomet's coffin; they have neither the unerring inſtinct of brutes, nor are allowed to fix the eye of reaſon on a perfect model. They were made to be loved, and muſt not aim at reſpect, leſt they ſhould be hunted out of ſociety as maſculine.

But to view the ſubject in another point of view. Do paſſive indolent women make the beſt wives? Confining our diſcuſſion to the preſent moment of exiſtence, let us ſee how ſuch weak creatures perform their part? Do the women who, by the attainment of a few ſuperficial accompliſhments, have ſtrengthened the prevailing prejudice, merely contribute to the happineſs of their huſbands? Do they diſplay their charms merely to amuſe them? And have women, who have early imbibed notions of paſſive obedience, ſufficient character to manage a family or educate children? So far from it, that, after ſurveying the hiſtory of woman, I cannot help, agreeing with the ſevereſt ſatiriſt, conſidering the ſex as the weakeſt as well as the moſt oppreſſed half of the ſpecies. What does hiſtory diſcloſe but marks of inferiority, and how few women have emancipated themſelves from the galling yoke of ſovereign man?—So few, that the exceptions remind me of an ingenious conjecture reſpecting Newton: that he was probably a being of a ſuperior order, accidentally caged in a human body. In the ſame ſtyle I have been led to imagine that the few extraordinary women who have ruſhed in eccentrical directions out of the orbit preſcribed to their ſex, were *male* ſpirited, confined by miſtake in a female frame. But if it be not philoſophical to think of ſex when the ſoul is mentioned, the inferiority muſt depend on the organs; or the heavenly fire, which is to ferment the clay, is not given in equal portions.

But avoiding, as I have hitherto done, any direct compariſon of the two ſexes collectively, or frankly acknowledging the inferiority of woman, according to the preſent appearance of things, I ſhall only inſiſt that men have increaſed that inferiority till women are almoſt ſunk below the ſtandard of rational creatures. Let their faculties have room to unfold, and their virtues to gain ſtrength, and then determine where the whole ſex muſt ſtand in the intellectual ſcale. Yet let it be remembered, that for a ſmall number of diſtinguiſhed women I do not aſk a place.

It is difficult for us purblind mortals to ſay to what height human diſcoveries and improvements may arrive when the gloom of deſpotiſm ſubſides, which makes us ſtumble at every ſtep; but, when morality ſhall be ſettled on a more ſolid baſis, then, without being gifted with a prophetic ſpirit, I will venture to predict that woman will be either the friend or ſlave of man. We ſhall not, as at preſent, doubt whether ſhe is a moral agent, or the link which unites man with brutes. But, ſhould it then appear, that like the brutes they were principally created for the uſe of man, he will let them patiently bite the bridle, and not mock them with empty praiſe; or, ſhould their rationality be proved, he will not impede their improvement merely to gratify his ſenſual appetites. He will not, with all the graces of rhetoric, adviſe them to ſubmit implicitly their underſtanding to the guidance of man. He will not, when he treats of the education of women, aſſert that they ought never to have the free uſe of reaſon, nor would he recommend cunning and diſſimulation to beings who are acquiring, in like manner as himſelf, the virtues of humanity.

Surely there can be but one rule of right, if morality has an eternal foundation, and whoever ſacrifices virtue, ſtrictly ſo called, to preſent convenience, or whoſe *duty* it is to act in ſuch a manner, lives only for the paſſing day, and cannot be an accountable creature.

The poet then ſhould have dropped his ſneer when he ſays,

> "If weak women go aſtray,
> "The ſtars are more in fault than they."

For that they are bound by the adamantine chain of deſtiny is moſt certain, if it be proved that they are never to exerciſe their own reaſon, never to be independent, never to riſe above opinion, or to feel the dignity of a rational will that only bows to God, and often forgets that the univerſe contains any being but itſelf and the model of perfection to which its ardent gaze is turned, to adore attributes that, ſoftened into virtues, may be imitated in kind, though the degree overwhelms the enraptured mind.

If, I ſay, for I would not impreſs by declamation when Reaſon offers her ſober light, if they are really capable of acting like rational creatures, let them not be treated like ſlaves; or, like the brutes who are dependent on the reaſon of man, when they aſſociate with him; but cultivate their minds, give them the ſalutary, ſublime curb of principle, and let them attain conſcious dignity by feeling themſelves only dependent on God. Teach them, in common with man, to ſubmit to neceſſity, inſtead of giving, to render them more pleaſing, a ſex to morals.

Further, ſhould experience prove that they cannot attain the ſame degree of ſtrength of mind, perſeverance, and fortitude, let their virtues be the ſame in kind, though they may vainly ſtruggle for the ſame degree; and the ſuperiority of man will be equally clear, if not clearer; and truth, as it is a ſimple principle, which admits of no modification, would be common to both. Nay, the order of ſociety as it is at preſent regulated would not be inverted, for woman would then only have the rank that reaſon aſſigned her, and arts could not be practiſed to bring the balance even, much leſs to turn it.

Theſe may be termed Utopian dreams.—Thanks to that Being who impreſſed them on my ſoul, and gave me ſufficient ſtrength of mind to dare to exert my own reaſon, till, becoming dependent only on him for the ſupport of my virtue, I view, with indignation, the miſtaken notions that enſlave my ſex.

I love man as my fellow; but his ſcepter, real, or uſurped, extends not to me, unleſs the reaſon of an individual demands my homage; and even then the ſubmiſſion is to reaſon, and not to man. In fact, the conduct of an accountable being muſt be regulated by the operations of its own reaſon; or on what foundation reſts the throne of God?

It appears to me neceſſary to dwell on theſe obvious truths, becauſe females have been inſulated, as it were; and, while they have been ſtripped of the virtues that ſhould clothe humanity, they have been decked with artificial graces that enable them to exerciſe a ſhort-lived tyranny. Love, in their boſoms, taking place of every nobler paſſion, their ſole ambition is to be fair, to raiſe emotion inſtead of inſpiring reſpect; and this ignoble deſire, like the ſervility in abſolute monarchies, deſtroys all ſtrength of character. Liberty is the mother of virtue, and if women are, by their very conſtitution, ſlaves, and not allowed to breathe the ſharp invigorating air of freedom, they muſt ever languiſh like exotics, and be reckoned beautiful flaws in nature;—let it alſo be remembered, that they are the only flaw.

As to the argument reſpecting the ſubjection in which the ſex has ever been held, it retorts on man. The many have always been enthralled by the few; and monſters, who ſcarcely have ſhewn any diſcernment of human excellence, have tyrannized over thouſands of their fellow creatures. Why have men of ſuperiour endowments ſubmitted to ſuch degradation? For, is it not univerſally acknowledged that kings, viewed collectively, have ever been inferior, in abilities and virtue, to the ſame number of men taken from the common

common maſs of mankind—yet, have they not, and are they not ſtill treated with a degree of reverence that is an inſult to reaſon? China is not the only country where a living man has been made a God. *Men* have ſubmitted to ſuperiour ſtrength to enjoy with impunity the pleaſure of the moment—*women* have only done the ſame, and therefore till it is proved that the courtier, who ſervilely reſigns the birthright of a man, is not a moral agent, it cannot be demonſtrated that woman is eſſentially inferior to man becauſe ſhe has always been ſubjugated.

Brutal force has hitherto governed the world, and that the ſcience of politics is in its infancy, is evident from philoſophers ſcrupling to give the knowledge moſt uſeful to man that determinate diſtinction.

I ſhall not purſue this argument any further than to eſtabliſh an obvious inference, that as ſound politics diffuſe liberty, mankind, including woman, will become more wiſe and virtuous.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

BODILY ſtrength from being the diſtinction of heroes is now ſunk into ſuch unmerited contempt, that men, as well as women, ſeem to think it unneceſſary: the latter, as it takes from their feminine graces, and from that lovely weakneſs, the ſource of their undue power; and the former, becauſe it appears inimical with the character of a gentleman.

That they have both by departing from one extreme run into another, may eaſily be proved; but firſt it may be proper to obſerve, that a vulgar error has obtained a degree of credit, which has given force to a falſe concluſion, in which an effect has been miſtaken for a cauſe.

People of genius have, very frequently, impaired their conſtitutions by ſtudy or careleſs inattention to their health, and the violence of their paſſions bearing a proportion to the vigour of their intellects, the ſword's deſtroying the ſcabbard has become almoſt proverbial, and ſuperficial obſervers have inferred from thence, that men of genius have commonly weak, or, to uſe a more faſhionable phraſe, delicate conſtitutions. Yet the contrary, I believe, will appear to be the fact; for, on diligent inquiry, I find that ſtrength of mind has, in moſt caſes, been accompanied by ſuperior ſtrength of body,—natural ſoundneſs of conſtitution,—not that robuſt tone of nerves and vigour of muſcles, which ariſe from bodily labour, when the mind is quieſcent, or only directs the hands.

Dr. Prieſtley has remarked, in the preface to his biographical chart, that the majority of great men have lived beyond forty-five. And, conſidering the thoughtleſs manner in which they have laviſhed their ſtrength, when inveſtigating a favourite ſcience they have waſted the lamp of life, forgetful of the midnight hour; or, when, loſt in poetic dreams, fancy has peopled the ſcene, and the ſoul has been diſturbed, till it ſhook the conſtitution, by the paſſions that meditation had raiſed; whoſe objects, the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion, faded before the exhauſted eye, they muſt have had iron frames. Shakſpeare never

grafped

graſped the airy dagger with a nerveleſs hand, nor did Milton tremble when he led Satan far from the confines of his dreary priſon.—Theſe were not the ravings of imbecility, the ſickly effuſions of diſtempered brains; but the exuberance of fancy, that ‘ in a fine phrenzy’ wandering, was not continually reminded of its material ſhackles.

I am aware that this argument would carry me further than it may be ſuppoſed I wiſh to go; but I follow truth, and, ſtill adhering to my firſt poſition, I will allow that bodily ſtrength ſeems to give man a natural ſuperiority over woman; and this is the only ſolid baſis on which the ſuperiority of the ſex can be built. But I ſtill inſiſt, that not only the virtue, but the *knowledge* of the two ſexes ſhould be the ſame in nature, if not in degree, and that women, conſidered not only as moral, but rational creatures, ought to endeavour to acquire human virtues (or perfections) by the *ſame* means as men, inſtead of being educated like a fanciful kind of *half* being—one of Rouſſeau's wild chimeras *.

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* ‘ Reſearches into abſtract and ſpeculative truths, the prin-
‘ ciples and axioms of ſciences, in ſhort, every thing which
‘ tends

But, if ſtrength of body be, with ſome ſhew of reaſon, the boaſt of men, why are women ſo infatuated as to be proud of a defect?

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‘ tends to generalize our ideas, is not the proper province of women; their ſtudies ſhould be relative to points of practice; it belongs to them to apply thoſe principles which men have diſcovered; and it is their part to make obſervations, which direct men to the eſtabliſhment of general principles. All the ideas of women, which have not the immediate tendency to points of duty, ſhould be directed to the ſtudy of men, and to the attainment of thoſe agreeable accompliſhments which have taſte for their object; for as to works of genius, they are beyond their capacity; neither have they ſufficient preciſion or power of attention to ſucceed in ſciences which require accuracy: and as to phyſical knowledge, it belongs to thoſe only who are moſt active, moſt inquiſitive; who comprehend the greateſt variety of objects: in ſhort, it belongs to thoſe who have the ſtrongeſt powers, and who exerciſe them moſt, to judge of the relations between ſenſible beings and the laws of nature. A woman who is naturally weak, and does not carry her ideas to any great extent, knows how to judge and make a proper eſtimate of thoſe movements which ſhe ſets to work, in order to aid her weakneſs; and theſe movements are the paſſions of men. The mechaniſm ſhe employs is much more powerful than ours; for all her levers move the human heart. She muſt have the ſkill to incline us to do every thing which her ſex will not enable her to do of herſelf, and which is neceſſary or agreeable to her; therefore ſhe ought to ſtudy the mind of man thoroughly, not the mind

of

defect? Rouſſeau has furniſhed them with a plauſible excuſe, which could only have occurred to a man, whoſe imagination had been allowed to run wild, and refine on the impreſſions made by exquiſite ſenſes;—that they might, forſooth, have a pretext for yielding to a natural appetite without violat-

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of man in general, abſtracted, but the diſpoſitions of thoſe men to whom ſhe is ſubject, either by the laws of her country or by the force of opinion. She ſhould learn to penetrate into their real ſentiments from their converſation, their actions, their looks, and geſtures. She ſhould alſo have the art, by her own converſation, actions, looks, and geſtures, to communicate thoſe ſentiments which are agreeable to them, without ſeeming to intend it. Men will argue more philoſophically about the human heart; but women will read the heart of man better than they. It belongs to women, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, to form an experimental morality, and to reduce the ſtudy of man to a ſyſtem. Women have moſt wit, men have moſt genius; women obſerve, men reaſon: from the concurrence of both we derive the cleareſt light and the moſt perfect knowledge, which the human mind is, of itſelf, capable of attaining. In one word, from hence we acquire the moſt intimate acquaintance, both with ourſelves and others, of which our nature is capable; and it is thus that art has a conſtant tendency to perfect thoſe endowments which nature has beſtowed.—The world is the book of women.’ *Rouſſeau's Emilius.* I hope my readers ſtill remember the compariſon, which I have brought forward, between women and officers.

ing a romantic ſpecies of modeſty, which gratifies the pride and libertiniſm of man.

Women, deluded by theſe ſentiments, ſometimes boaſt of their weakneſs, cunningly obtaining power by playing on the *weakneſs* of men; and they may well glory in their illicit ſway, for, like Turkiſh baſhaws, they have more real power than their maſters: but virtue is ſacrificed to temporary gratifications, and the reſpectability of life to the triumph of an hour.

Women, as well as deſpots, have now, perhaps, more power than they would have if the world, divided and ſubdivided into kingdoms and families, was governed by laws deduced from the exerciſe of reaſon; but in obtaining it, to carry on the compariſon, their character is degraded, and licentiouſneſs ſpread through the whole aggregate of ſociety. The many become pedeſtal to the few. I, therefore, will venture to aſſert, that till women are more rationally educated, the progreſs of human virtue and improvement in knowledge muſt receive continual checks. And if it be granted that woman was not created merely to gratify the appetite of man, nor to be the upper ſervant, who provides his meals and takes care of his

linen, it muſt follow, that the firſt care of thoſe mothers or fathers, who really attend to the education of females, ſhould be, if not to ſtrengthen the body, at leaſt, not to deſtroy the conſtitution by miſtaken notions of beauty and female excellence; nor ſhould girls ever be allowed to imbibe the pernicious notion that a defect can, by any chemical proceſs of reaſoning, become an excellence. In this reſpect, I am happy to find, that the author of one of the moſt inſtructive books, that our country has produced for children, coincides with me in opinion; I ſhall quote his pertinent remarks to give the force of his reſpectable authority to reaſon *.

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* A reſpectable old man gives the following ſenſible account of the method he purſued when educating his daughter. ‘I endeavoured to give both to her mind and body a degree of vigour, which is ſeldom found in the female ſex. As ſoon as ſhe was ſufficiently advanced in ſtrength to be capable of the lighter labours of huſbandry and gardening, I employed her as my conſtant companion. Selene, for that was her name, ſoon acquired a dexterity in all theſe ruſtic employments, which I conſidered with equal pleaſure and admiration. If women are in general feeble both in body and mind, it ariſes leſs from nature than from education. We encourage a vicious indolence and inactivity, which we falſely call delicacy; inſtead of hardening their

But ſhould it be proved that woman is naturally weaker than man, from whence does it follow that it is natural for her to labour to become ſtill weaker than nature intended her to be? Arguments of this caſt are an inſult to

common ſenſe, and ſavour of paſſion. The *divine right* of huſbands, like the divine right of kings, may, it is to be hoped, in this enlightened age, be conteſted without danger, and, though conviction may not ſilence many boiſterous diſputants, yet, when any prevailing prejudice is attacked, the wiſe will conſider, and leave the narrow-minded to rail with thoughtleſs vehemence at innovation.

The mother, who wiſhes to give true dignity of character to her daughter, muſt, regardleſs of the ſneers of ignorance, proceed on a plan diametrically oppoſite to that which Rouſſeau has recommended with all the deluding charms of eloquence and philoſophical ſophiſtry: for his eloquence renders abſurdities plauſible, and his dogmatic concluſions puzzle, without convincing, thoſe who have not ability to refute them.

Throughout the whole animal kingdom every young creature requires almoſt continual exerciſe, and the infancy of children, conformable to this intimation, ſhould be paſſed in harmleſs gambols, that exerciſe the feet and hands, without requiring very minute direction from the head, or the conſtant attention of a nurſe. In fact, the care neceſ-

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‘minds by the ſeverer principles of reaſon and philoſophy, we breed them to uſeleſs arts, which terminate in vanity and ſenſuality. In moſt of the countries which I had viſited, they are taught nothing of an higher nature than a few modulations of the voice, or uſeleſs poſtures of the body; their time is conſumed in ſloth or trifles, and trifles become the only purſuits capable of intereſting them. We ſeem to forget, that it is upon the qualities of the female ſex that our own domeſtic comforts and the education of our children muſt depend. And what are the comforts or the education which a race of beings, corrupted from their infancy, and unacquainted with all the duties of life, are fitted to beſtow? To touch a muſical inſtrument with uſeleſs ſkill, to exhibit their natural or affected graces to the eyes of indolent and debauched young men, to diſſipate their huſband's patrimony in riotous and unneceſſary expences, theſe are the only arts cultivated by women in moſt of the poliſhed nations I had ſeen. And the conſequences are uniformly ſuch as may be expected to proceed from ſuch polluted ſources, private miſery and public ſervitude.

‘But Selene's education was regulated by different views, and conducted upon ſeverer principles; if that can be called ſeverity which opens the mind to a ſenſe of moral and religious duties, and moſt effectually arms it againſt the inevitable evils of life.’

*Mr. Day's Sandford and Merton*, Vol. III.

ſary for ſelf-preſervation is the firſt natural exerciſe of the underſtanding, as little inventions to amuſe the preſent moment unfold the imagination. But theſe wiſe deſigns of nature are counteracted by miſtaken fondneſs or blind zeal. The child is not left a moment to its own direction, particularly a girl, and thus rendered dependent—dependence is called natural.

To preſerve perſonal beauty, woman's glory! the limbs and faculties are cramped with worſe than Chineſe bands, and the ſedentary life which they are condemned to live, whilſt boys frolic in the open air, weakens the muſcles and relaxes the nerves. —As for Rouſſeau's remarks, which have ſince been echoed by ſeveral writers, that they have naturally, that is from their birth, independent of education, a fondneſs for dolls, dreſſing, and talking—they are ſo puerile as not to merit a ſerious refutation. That a girl, condemned to ſit for hours together liſtening to the idle chat of weak nurſes, or to attend at her mother's toilet, will endeavour to join the converſation, is, indeed, very natural; and that ſhe will imitate her mother or aunts, and amuſe herſelf by adorning her lifeleſs doll, as they do in dreſſing her, poor innocent babe! is undoubtedly a moſt natural conſequence. For men of the greateſt abilities have ſeldom had ſufficient ſtrength to riſe above the ſurrounding atmoſphere; and, if the page of genius has always been blurred by the prejudices of the age, ſome allowance ſhould be made for a ſex, who, like kings, always ſee things through a falſe medium.

In this manner may the fondneſs for dreſs, conſpicuous in women, be eaſily accounted for, without ſuppoſing it the reſult of a deſire to pleaſe the ſex on which they are dependent. The abſurdity, in ſhort, of ſuppoſing that a girl is naturally a coquette, and that a deſire connected with the impulſe of nature to propagate the ſpecies, ſhould appear even before an improper education has, by heating the imagination, called it forth prematurely, is ſo unphiloſophical, that ſuch a ſagacious obſerver as Rouſſeau would not have adopted it, if he had not been accuſtomed to make reaſon give way to his deſire of ſingularity, and truth to a favourite paradox.

Yet thus to give a ſex to mind was not very conſiſtent with the principles of a man who argued ſo warmly, and ſo well, for the immortality of the ſoul.—But what a weak barrier is truth when it ſtands in the way of an hypotheſis! Rouſſeau reſpected—almoſt adored virtue—and yet he allowed himſelf to love with ſenſual fondneſs. His imagination conſtantly prepared inflammable fewel for his inflammable ſenſes; but, in order to reconcile his reſpect for ſelf-denial, fortitude, and thoſe heroic virtues, which a mind like his could not coolly admire, he labours to invert the law of nature, and broaches a doctrine pregnant with miſchief and derogatory to the character of ſupreme wiſdom.

His ridiculous ſtories, which tend to prove that girls are *naturally* attentive to their perſons, without laying any ſtreſs on daily example, are below contempt.—And that a little miſs ſhould have ſuch a correct taſte as to neglect the pleaſing amuſement of making O's, merely becauſe ſhe perceived that it was an ungraceful attitude, ſhould be ſelected with the anecdotes of the learned pig*.

I have, probably, had an opportunity of obſerving more girls in their infancy than J. J. Rouſſeau—I can recollect my own feelings, and I have looked ſteadily around me; yet, ſo far from coinciding with him in opinion reſpecting the firſt dawn of the female character, I will venture to affirm, that a girl, whoſe ſpirits have not been damped by inactivity, or innocence tainted by falſe ſhame, will always be a romp, and the doll will never excite attention unleſs confinement allows her no alternative. Girls and boys, in ſhort, would play harmleſsly together, if the diſtinction of ſex was not inculcated long before nature makes any difference.—I will go further, and affirm, as an indiſputable fact, that moſt of the women, in the circle of my obſervation, who have acted like rational creatures, or ſhewn any vigour of intellect, have accidentally been allowed to run wild— as ſome of the elegant formers of the fair ſex would inſinuate.

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* 'I once knew a young perſon who learned to write before ſhe learned to read, and began to write with her needle before ſhe could uſe a pen. At firſt, indeed, ſhe took it into her head to make no other letter than the O: this letter ſhe was conſtantly making of all ſizes, and always the wrong way. Unluckily, one day, as ſhe was intent on this employment, ſhe happened to ſee herſelf in the looking-glaſs; when, taking a diſlike to the conſtrained attitude in which ſhe ſat while writing, ſhe threw away her pen, like another Pallas, and determined againſt making the O any more. Her brother was alſo equally averſe to writing: it was the confinement, however, and not the conſtrained attitude, that moſt diſguſted him.' *Rouſſeau's Emilius.*

The baneful conſequences which flow from inattention to health during infancy, and youth, extend further than is ſuppoſed— dependence of body naturally produces dependence of mind; and how can ſhe be a good wife or mother, the greater part of whoſe time is employed to guard againſt or endure ſickneſs? Nor can it be expected that a woman will reſolutely endeavour to ſtrengthen her conſtitution and abſtain from enervating indulgencies, if artificial notions of beauty, and falſe deſcriptions of ſenſibility, have been early entangled with her motives of action. Moſt men are ſometimes obliged to bear with bodily inconveniencies, and to endure, occaſionally, the inclemency of the elements; but genteel women are, literally ſpeaking, ſlaves to their bodies, and glory in their ſubjection.

I once knew a weak woman of faſhion, who was more than commonly proud of her delicacy and ſenſibility. She thought a diſtinguiſhing taſte and puny appetite the height of all human perfection, and acted accordingly.—I have ſeen this weak ſophiſticated being neglect all the duties of life, yet recline with ſelf-complacency on a ſofa, and boaſt of her want of appetite as a proof of delicacy that extended to, or, perhaps, aroſe from, her exquiſite ſenſibility: for it is difficult to render intelligible ſuch ridiculous jargon.—Yet, at the moment, I have ſeen her inſult a worthy old gentlewoman, whom unexpected misfortunes had made dependent on her oſtentatious bounty, and who, in better days, had claims on her gratitude. Is it poſſible that a human creature could have become ſuch a weak and depraved being, if, like the Sybarites, diſſolved in luxury, every thing like virtue had not been worn away, or never impreſſed by precept, a poor ſubſtitute, it is true, for cultivation of mind, though it ſerves as a fence againſt vice?

Such a woman is not a more irrational monſter than ſome of the Roman emperors, who were depraved by lawleſs power. Yet, ſince kings have been more under the reſtraint of law, and the curb, however weak, of honour, the records of hiſtory are not filled with ſuch unnatural inſtances of folly and cruelty, nor does the deſpotiſm that kills virtue and genius in the bud, hover over Europe with that deſtructive blaſt which deſolates Turky, and renders the men, as well as the ſoil, unfruitful.

Women are every where in this deplorable ſtate; for, in order to preſerve their innocence, as ignorance is courteouſly termed, truth is hidden from them, and they are made to aſſume an artificial character before their faculties have acquired any ſtrength. Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's ſceptre, the mind ſhapes itſelf to the body, and, roaming round its gilt cage, only ſeeks to adorn its priſon. Men have various employments and purſuits which engage their attention, and give a character to the opening mind; but women, confined to one, and having their thoughts conſtantly directed to the moſt inſignificant part of themſelves, ſeldom extend their views beyond the triumph of the hour. But was their underſtanding once emancipated from the ſlavery to which the pride and ſenſuality of man and their ſhort-ſighted deſire, like that of dominion in tyrants, of preſent ſway, has ſubjected them,

we ſhould probably read of their weakneſſes with ſurpriſe. I muſt be allowed to purſue the argument a little farther.

Perhaps, if the exiſtence of an evil being was allowed, who, in the allegorial language of ſcripture, went about ſeeking whom he ſhould devour, he could not more effectually degrade the human character than by giving a man abſolute power.

This argument branches into various ramifications.—Birth, riches, and every extrinſic advantage that exalt a man above his fellows, without any mental exertion, ſink him in reality below them. In proportion to his weakneſs, he is played upon by deſigning men, till the bloated monſter has loſt all traces of humanity. And that tribes of men, like flocks of ſheep, ſhould quietly follow ſuch a leader, is a ſoleciſm that only a deſire of preſent enjoyment and narrowneſs of underſtanding can ſolve. Educated in ſlaviſh dependence, and enervated by luxury and ſloth, where ſhall we find men who will ſtand forth to aſſert the rights of man;—or claim the privilege of moral beings, who ſhould have but one road to excellence? Slavery to monarchs and miniſters, which the world will be long in freeing itſelf from, and whoſe deadly graſp ſtops the progreſs of the human mind, is not yet aboliſhed.

Let not men then in the pride of power, uſe the ſame arguments that tyrannic kings and venal miniſters have uſed, and fallaciouſly aſſert that woman ought to be ſubjected becauſe ſhe has always been ſo.—But, when man, governed by reaſonable laws, enjoys his natural freedom, let him deſpiſe woman, if ſhe do not ſhare it with him; and, till that glorious period arrives, in deſcanting on the folly of the ſex, let him not overlook his own.

Women, it is true, obtaining power by unjuſt means, by practiſing or foſtering vice, evidently loſe the rank which reaſon would aſſign them, and they become either abject ſlaves or capricious tyrants. They loſe all ſimplicity, all dignity of mind, in acquiring power, and act as men are obſerved to act when they have been exalted by the ſame means.

It is time to effect a revolution in female manners—time to reſtore to them their loſt dignity—and make them, as a part of the

human ſpecies, labour by reforming themſelves to reform the world. It is time to ſeparate unchangeable morals from local manners.—If men be demi-gods—why let us ſerve them! And if the dignity of the female ſoul be as diſputable as that of animals—if their reaſon does not afford ſufficient light to direct their conduct whilſt unerring inſtinct is denied—they are ſurely of all creatures the moſt miſerable! and, bent beneath the iron hand of deſtiny, muſt ſubmit to be a *fair defect* in creation. But to juſtify the ways of Providence reſpecting them, by pointing out ſome irrefragable reaſon for thus making ſuch a large portion of mankind accountable and not accountable, would puzzle the ſubtileſt caſuiſt.

The only ſolid foundation for morality appears to be the character of the ſupreme Being; the harmony of which ariſes from a balance of attributes;—and, to ſpeak with reverence, one attribute ſeems to imply the *neceſſity* of another. He muſt be juſt, becauſe he is wiſe, he muſt be good, becauſe he is omnipotent. For to exalt one attribute at the expence of another equally noble and neceſſary, bears the ſtamp of the warped reaſon of man—the homage of paſſion. Man, accuſtomed to bow down to power in his ſavage ſtate, can ſeldom diveſt himſelf of this barbarous prejudice, even when civilization determines how much ſuperior mental is to bodily ſtrength; and his reaſon is clouded by theſe crude opinions, even when he thinks of the Deity.—His omnipotence is made to ſwallow up, or preſide over his other attributes, and thoſe mortals are ſuppoſed to limit his power irreverently, who think that it muſt be regulated by his wiſdom.

I diſclaim that ſpecious humility which, after inveſtigating nature, ſtops at the author. —The High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, doubtleſs poſſeſſes many attributes of which we can form no conception; but reaſon tells me that they cannot claſh with thoſe I adore—and I am compelled to liſten to her voice.

It ſeems natural for man to ſearch for excellence, and either to trace it in the object that he worſhips, or blindly to inveſt it with perfection, as a garment. But what good effect can the latter mode of worſhip have on the moral conduct of a rational being? He bends to power; he adores a dark cloud,

which may open a bright proſpect to him, or burſt in angry, lawleſs fury, on his devoted head—he knows not why. And, ſuppoſing that the Deity acts from the vague impulſe of an undirected will, man muſt alſo follow his own, or act according to rules, deduced from principles which he diſclaims as irreverent. Into this dilemma have both enthuſiaſts and cooler thinkers fallen, when they laboured to free men from the wholeſome reſtraints which a juſt conception of the character of God impoſes.

It is not impious thus to ſcan the attributes of the Almighty: in fact, who can avoid it that exerciſes his faculties? For to love God as the fountain of wiſdom, goodneſs, and power, appears to be the only worſhip uſeful to a being who wiſhes to acquire either virtue or knowledge. A blind unſettled affection may, like human paſſions, occupy the mind and warm the heart, whilſt, to do juſtice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God, is forgotten. I ſhall purſue this ſubject ſtill further, when I conſider religion in a light oppoſite to that recommended by Dr. Gregory, who treats it as a matter of ſentiment or taſte.

To return from this apparent digreſſion. It were to be wiſhed that women would cheriſh an affection for their huſbands, founded on the ſame principle that devotion ought to reſt upon. No other firm baſe is there under heaven—for let them beware of the fallacious light of ſentiment; too often uſed as a ſofter phraſe for ſenſuality. It follows then, I think, that from their infancy women ſhould either be ſhut up like eaſtern princes, or educated in ſuch a manner as to be able to think and act for themſelves.

Why do men halt between two opinions, and expect impoſſibilities? Why do they expect virtue from a ſlave, from a being whom the conſtitution of civil ſociety has rendered weak, if not vicious?

Still I know that it will require a conſiderable length of time to eradicate the firmly rooted prejudices which ſenſualiſts have planted; it will alſo require ſome time to convince women that they act contrary to their real intereſt on an enlarged ſcale, when they cheriſh or affect weakneſs under the name of delicacy, and to convince the world that the poiſoned ſource of female vices and follies, if it be neceſſary, in compliance with cuſtom, to uſe ſynonymous terms in a lax ſenſe, has been the ſenſual homage paid to beauty:—to beauty of features; for it has been ſhrewdly obſerved by a German writer, that a pretty woman, as an object of deſire, is generally allowed to be ſo by men of all deſcriptions; whilſt a fine woman, who inſpires more ſublime emotions by diſplaying intellectual beauty, may be overlooked or obſerved with indifference, by thoſe men who find their happineſs in the gratification of their appetites. I foreſee an obvious retort—whilſt man remains ſuch an imperfect being as he appears hitherto to have been, he will, more or leſs, be the ſlave of his appetites; and thoſe women obtaining moſt power who gratify a predominant one, the ſex is degraded by a phyſical, if not by a moral neceſſity.

This objection has, I grant, ſome force; but while ſuch a ſublime precept exiſts, as, ‘ be pure as your heavenly Father is pure;’ it would ſeem that the virtues of man are not limited by the Being who alone could limit them; and that he may preſs forward without conſidering whether he ſteps out of his ſphere by indulging ſuch a noble ambition. To the wild billows it has been ſaid, ‘ thus far

‘ ſhalt thou go, and no further; and here ſhall ‘ thy proud waves be ſtayed.’ Vainly then do they beat and foam, reſtrained by the power that confines the ſtruggling planets in their orbits, matter yields to the great governing Spirit.—But an immortal ſoul, not reſtrained by mechanical laws and ſtruggling to free itſelf from the ſhackles of matter, contributes to, inſtead of diſturbing, the order of creation, when, co-operating with the Father of ſpirits, it tries to govern itſelf by the invariable rule that, in a degree, before which our imagination faints, the univerſe is regulated.

Beſides, if women are educated for dependence; that is, to act according to the will of another fallible being, and ſubmit, right or wrong, to power, where are we to ſtop? Are they to be conſidered as vicegerents allowed to reign over a ſmall domain, and anſwerable for their conduct to a higher tribunal, liable to error?

It will not be difficult to prove that ſuch delegates will act like men ſubjected by fear, and make their children and ſervants endure their tyrannical oppreſſion. As they ſubmit without reaſon, they will, having no fixed rules to ſquare their conduct by, be kind, or

cruel, juſt as the whim of the moment directs; and we ought not to wonder if ſometimes, galled by their heavy yoke, they take a malignant pleaſure in reſting it on weaker ſhoulders.

But, ſuppoſing a woman, trained up to obedience, be married to a ſenſible man, who directs her judgment without making her feel the ſervility of her ſubjection, to act with as much propriety by this reflected light as can be expected when reaſon is taken at ſecond hand, yet ſhe cannot enſure the life of her protector; he may die and leave her with a large family.

A double duty devolves on her; to educate them in the character of both father and mother; to form their principles and ſecure their property. But, alas! ſhe has never thought, much leſs acted for herſelf. She has only learned to pleaſe * men, to depend

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* ‘ In the union of the ſexes, both purſue one common ‘ object, but not in the ſame manner. From their diverſity ‘ in this particular, ariſes the firſt determinate difference ‘ between the moral relations of each. The one ſhould ‘ be active and ſtrong, the other paſſive and weak: it is ‘ neceſſary the one ſhould have both the power and the will, ‘ and that the other ſhould make little reſiſtance.

‘ This principle being eſtabliſhed, it follows that woman gracefully on them; yet, encumbered with children, how is ſhe to obtain another protector—a huſband to ſupply the place of reaſon? A rational man, for we are not treading on romantic ground, though he may think her a pleaſing docile creature, will not chooſe to marry a *family* for love, when the world

contains many more pretty creatures. What is then to become of her? She either falls an eaſy prey to ſome mean fortune-hunter, who defrauds her children of their paternal inheritance, and renders her miſerable; or becomes the victim of diſcontent and blind indulgence. Unable to educate her ſons, or impreſs them with reſpect; for it is not a play on words to aſſert, that people are never reſpected, though filling an important ſtation, who are not reſpectable; ſhe pines under the anguiſh of unavailing impotent regret. The ſerpent's tooth enters into her very ſoul, and the vices of licentious youth bring her with ſorrow, if not with poverty alſo, to the grave.

This is not an overcharged picture; on the contrary, it is a very poſſible caſe, and ſomething ſimilar muſt have fallen under every attentive eye.

I have, however, taken it for granted, that ſhe was well-diſpoſed, though experience ſhews, that the blind may as eaſily be led into a ditch as along the beaten road. But ſuppoſing, no very improbable conjecture, that a being only taught to pleaſe muſt ſtill find her happineſs in pleaſing;—what an example of folly, not to ſay vice, will ſhe be to her

‘ is expreſsly formed to pleaſe the man: if the obligation be reciprocal alſo, and the man ought to pleaſe in his turn, it is not ſo immediately neceſſary: his great merit is in his power, and he pleaſes merely becauſe he is ſtrong. This, I muſt confeſs, is not one of the refined maxims of love; it is, however, one of the laws of nature, prior to love itſelf.

‘ If woman be formed to pleaſe and be ſubjected to man, it is her place, doubtleſs, to render herſelf agreeable to him, inſtead of challenging his paſſion. The violence of his deſires depends on her charms; it is by means of theſe ſhe ſhould urge him to the exertion of thoſe powers which nature hath given him. The moſt ſucceſsful method of exciting them, is, to render ſuch exertion neceſſary by their reſiſtance; as, in that caſe, ſelf-love is added to deſire, and the one triumphs in the victory which the other obliged to acquire. Hence ariſe the various modes of attack and defence between the ſexes; the boldneſs of one ſex and the timidity of the other; and, in a word, that baſhfulneſs and modeſty with which nature hath armed the weak, in order to ſubdue the ſtrong.’

*Rouſſeau's Emilius..*

I ſhall make no other comment on this ingenious paſſage, than juſt to obſerve, that it is the philoſophy of laſciviouſneſs.

innocent daughters! The mother will be loſt in the coquette, and, inſtead of making friends of her daughters, view them with eyes aſkance, for they are rivals—rivals more cruel than any other, becauſe they invite a compariſon, and drive her from the throne of beauty, who has never thought of a ſeat on the bench of reaſon.

It does not require a lively pencil, or the diſcriminating outline of a caricature, to ſketch the domeſtic miſeries and petty vices which ſuch a miſtreſs of a family diffuſes. Still ſhe only acts as a woman ought to act, brought up according to Rouſſeau's ſyſtem. She can never be reproached for being maſculine, or turning out of her ſphere; nay, ſhe may obſerve another of his grand rules, and cautiouſly preſerving her reputation free from ſpot, be reckoned a good kind of woman. Yet in what reſpect can ſhe be termed good? She abſtains, it is true, without any great ſtruggle, from committing groſs crimes; but how does ſhe fulfil her duties? Duties!—in truth ſhe has enough to think of to adorn her body and nurſe a weak conſtitution.

With reſpect to religion, ſhe never preſumed to judge for herſelf; but conformed, as a dependent creature ſhould, to the ceremonies of the church which ſhe was brought up in, piouſly believing that wiſer heads than her own have ſettled that buſineſs:—and not to doubt is her point of perfection. She therefore pays her tythe of mint and cummin—and thanks her God that ſhe is not as other women are. Theſe are the bleſſed effects of a good education! Theſe the virtues of man's help-mate*!

I muſt relieve myſelf by drawing a different picture.

Let fancy now preſent a woman with a tolerable underſtanding, for I do not wiſh to leave the line of mediocrity, whoſe conſtitution, ſtrengthened by exerciſe, has allowed her body to acquire its full vigour; her mind, at the ſame time, gradually expanding itſelf

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* 'O how lovely,' exclaims Rouſſeau, ſpeaking of Sophia, 'is her ignorance! Happy is he who is deſtined to 'inſtruct her! She will never pretend to be the tutor of 'her huſband, but will be content to be his pupil. Far 'from attempting to ſubject him to her taſte, ſhe will 'accommodate herſelf to his. She will be more eſtimable 'to him, than if ſhe was learned: he will have a pleaſure 'in inſtructing her.' *Rouſſeau's Emilius.*

I ſhall content myſelf with ſimply aſking, how friendſhip can ſubſiſt, when love expires, between the maſter and his pupil?

itſelf to comprehend the moral duties of life, and in what human virtue and dignity conſiſt.

Formed thus by the diſcharge of the relative duties of her ſtation, ſhe marries from affection, without loſing ſight of prudence, and looking beyond matrimonial felicity, ſhe ſecures her huſband's reſpect before it is neceſſary to exert mean arts to pleaſe him and feed a dying flame, which nature doomed to expire when the object became familiar, when friendſhip and forbearance take place of a more ardent affection.—This is the natural death of love, and domeſtic peace is not deſtroyed by ſtruggles to prevent its extinction. I alſo ſuppoſe the huſband to be virtuous; or ſhe is ſtill more in want of independent principles.

Fate, however, breaks this tie.—She is left a widow, perhaps, without a ſufficient proviſion; but ſhe is not deſolate! The pang of nature is felt; but after time has ſoftened ſorrow into melancholy reſignation, her heart turns to her children with redoubled fondneſs, and anxious to provide for them, affection gives a ſacred heroic caſt to her maternal duties. She thinks that not only the eye ſees her virtuous efforts from whom all her comfort now muſt flow, and whoſe approbation is life; but her imagination, a little abſtracted and exalted by grief, dwells on the fond hope that the eyes which her trembling hand cloſed, may ſtill ſee how ſhe ſubdues every wayward paſſion to fulfil the double duty of being the father as well as the mother of her children. Raiſed to heroiſm by miſfortunes, ſhe repreſſes the firſt faint dawning of a natural inclination, before it ripens into love, and in the bloom of life forgets her ſex—forgets the pleaſure of an awakening paſſion, which might again have been inſpired and returned. She no longer thinks of pleaſing, and conſcious dignity prevents her from priding herſelf on account of the praiſe which her conduct demands. Her children have her love, and her brighteſt hopes are beyond the grave, where her imagination often ſtrays.

I think I ſee her ſurrounded by her children, reaping the reward of her care. The intelligent eye meets hers, whilſt health and innocence ſmile on their chubby cheeks, and as they grow up the cares of life are leſſened by their grateful attention. She lives to ſee the virtues which ſhe endeavoured to plant on principles, fixed into habits, to ſee her children attain a ſtrength of character ſufficient to enable them to endure adverſity without forgetting their mother's example.

The taſk of life thus fulfilled, ſhe calmly waits for the ſleep of death, and riſing from the grave, may ſay—Behold, thou gaveſt me a talent—and here are five talents.

I wiſh to ſum up what I have ſaid in a few words, for I here throw down my gauntlet, and deny the exiſtence of ſexual virtues, not excepting modeſty. For man and woman, truth, if I underſtand the meaning of the word, muſt be the ſame; yet the fanciful female character, ſo prettily drawn by poets and noveliſts, demanding the ſacrifice of truth and ſincerity, virtue becomes a relative idea, having no other foundation than utility, and of that utility men pretend arbitrarily to judge, ſhaping it to their own convenience.

Women, I allow, may have different duties to fulfil; but they are *human* duties, and the principles that ſhould regulate the diſcharge of them, I ſturdily maintain, muſt be the ſame.

To become reſpectable, the exerciſe of their underſtanding is neceſſary, there is no other foundation for independence of character; I mean explicitly to ſay that they muſt only bow to the authority of reaſon, inſtead of being the *modeſt* ſlaves of opinion.

In the ſuperiour ranks of life how ſeldom do we meet with a man of ſuperiour abilities, or even common acquirements? The reaſon appears to me clear, the ſtate they are born in was an unnatural one. The human character has ever been formed by the employments the individual, or claſs, purſues; and if the faculties are not ſharpened by neceſſity, they muſt remain obtuſe. The argument may fairly be extended to women; for, ſeldom occupied by ſerious buſineſs, the purſuit of pleaſure gives that inſignificancy to their character which renders the ſociety of the *great* ſo inſipid. The ſame want of firmneſs, produced by a ſimilar cauſe, forces them both to fly from themſelves to noiſy pleaſures, and artificial paſſions, till vanity takes place of every ſocial affection, and the characteriſtics of humanity can ſcarcely be diſcerned. Such are the bleſſings of civil governments, as they are at preſent organized, that wealth and female ſoftneſs equally tend to debaſe mankind, and are produced by the ſame cauſe; but allowing women to be rational creatures, they ſhould be incited to acquire virtues which they may call their own, for how can a rational being be ennobled by any thing that is not obtained by its *own* exertions?

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

### OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF DEGRADATION TO WHICH WOMAN IS REDUCED BY VARIOUS CAUSES.

THAT woman is naturally weak, or degraded by a concurrence of circumſtances, is, I think, clear. But this poſition I ſhall ſimply contraſt with a concluſion, which I have frequently heard fall from ſenſible men in favour of an ariſtocracy: that the maſs of mankind cannot be any thing, or the obſequious ſlaves, who patiently allow themſelves to be penned up, would feel their own conſequence, and ſpurn their chains. Men, they further obſerve, ſubmit every where to oppreſſion, when they have only to lift up their heads to throw off the yoke; yet, inſtead of aſſerting their birthright, they quietly lick the duſt, and ſay, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Women, I argue from analogy, are degraded by the ſame propenſity to enjoy the preſent moment; and, at laſt, deſpiſe the freedom which they have not ſufficient virtue to ſtruggle to attain. But I muſt be more explicit.

With reſpect to the culture of the heart, it is unanimouſly allowed that ſex is out of the queſtion; but the line of ſubordination in the mental powers is never to be paſſed over *. Only ‘ abſolute in lovelineſs,’ the portion of rationality granted to woman, is, indeed, very ſcanty; for, denying her genius and judgment, it is ſcarcely poſſible to divine what remains to characterize intellect.

The ſtamina of immortality, if I may be allowed the phraſe, is the perfectibility of human reaſon; for, was man created perfect, or did a flood of knowledge break in upon

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* Into what inconſiſtencies do men fall when they argue without the compaſs of principles. Women, weak women, are compared with angels; yet, a ſuperiour order of beings ſhould be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs more intellect than man; or, in what does their ſuperiority conſiſt? In the ſame ſtyle, to drop the ſneer, they are allowed to poſſeſs more goodneſs of heart, piety, and benevolence.—I doubt the fact, though it be courteouſly brought forward, unleſs ignorance be allowed to be the mother of devotion; for I am firmly perſuaded that, on an average, the proportion between virtue and knowledge, is more upon a par than is commonly granted.

him,

him, when he arrived at maturity, that precluded error, I ſhould doubt whether his exiſtence would be continued after the diſſolution of the body. But, in the preſent ſtate of things, every difficulty in morals that eſcapes from human diſcuſſion, and equally baffles the inveſtigation of profound thinking, and the lightning glance of genius, is an argument on which I build my belief of the immortality of the ſoul. Reaſon is, conſequentially, the ſimple power of improvement; or, more properly ſpeaking, of diſcerning truth. Every individual is in this reſpect a world in itſelf. More or leſs may be conſpicuous in one being than another; but the nature of reaſon muſt be the ſame in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature with the Creator; for, can that ſoul be ſtamped with the heavenly image, that is not perfected by the exerciſe of its own reaſon *? Yet outwardly ornamented with elaborate care, and ſo adorned to delight man, ‘ that with honour he may love †,’ the

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‘ * The brutes,’ ſays Lord Monboddo, ‘ remain in the ‘ ſtate in which nature has placed them, except in ſo far as ‘ their natural inſtinct is improved by the culture *we* be‘ ſtow upon them.’

† Vide Milton.

ſoul of woman is not allowed to have this diſtinction, and man, ever placed between her and reaſon, ſhe is always repreſented as only created to ſee through a groſs medium, and to take things on truſt. But, diſmiſſing theſe fanciful theories, and conſidering woman as a whole, let it be what it will, inſtead of a part of man, the inquiry is whether ſhe has reaſon or not. If ſhe has, which, for a moment, I will take for granted, ſhe was not created merely to be the ſolace of man, and the ſexual ſhould not deſtroy the human character.

Into this error men have, probably, been led by viewing education in a falſe light; not conſidering it as the firſt ſtep to form a being advancing gradually towards perfection*; but only as a preparation for life. On this ſenſual error, for I muſt call it ſo, has the falſe ſyſtem of female manners been reared, which robs the whole ſex of its dignity, and claſſes the brown and fair with the ſmiling flowers that only adorns the land. This has ever been the language of men, and the fear of

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* This word is not ſtrictly juſt, but I cannot find a better.

departing from a ſuppoſed ſexual character, has made even women of ſuperiour ſenſe adopt the ſame ſentiments*. Thus underſtanding, ſtrictly ſpeaking, has been denied to woman; and inſtinct, ſublimated into wit and cunning, for the purpoſes of life, has been ſubſtituted in its ſtead.

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* 'Pleaſure's the portion of th' *inferior* kind;
'But glory, virtue, Heaven for *man* deſign'd.

After writing theſe lines, how could Mrs. Barbauld write the following ignoble compariſon?

'*To a Lady, with ſome painted flowers.*'

'Flowers to the fair: to you theſe flowers I bring,
'And ſtrive to greet you with an earlier ſpring.
'*Flowers* SWEET, *and gay, and* DELICATE LIKE YOU;
'*Emblems of innocence, and beauty too.*
'With flowers the Graces bind their yellow hair,
'And flowery wreaths conſenting lovers wear.
'*Flowers, the ſole luxury which nature knew,*
'In Eden's pure and guiltleſs garden grew.
'*To loftier forms are rougher taſks aſſign'd;*
'*The ſheltering oak reſiſts the ſtormy wind,*
'*The tougher yew repels invading foes,*
'*And the tall pine for future navies grows;*
'*But this ſoft family, to cares unknown,*
'*Were born for pleaſure and delight* ALONE.
'Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
'*They ſpring to* CHEER *the ſenſe, and* GLAD *the heart.*
'Nor bluſh, my fair, to own you copy theſe;
'*Your* BEST, *your* SWEETEST *empire* is—to PLEASE.'

So the men tell us; but virtue muſt be acquired by *rough* toils, and uſeful ſtruggles with worldly *cares*.

The power of generalizing ideas, of drawing comprehenſive concluſions from individual obſervations, is the only acquirement, for an immortal being, that really deſerves the name of knowledge. Merely to obſerve, without endeavouring to account for any thing, may (in a very incomplete manner) ſerve as the common ſenſe of life; but where is the ſtore laid up that is to clothe the ſoul when it leaves the body?

This power has not only been denied to women; but writers have inſiſted that it is inconſiſtent, with a few exceptions, with their ſexual character. Let men prove this, and I ſhall grant that woman only exiſts for man. I muſt, however, previouſly remark, that the power of generalizing ideas, to any great extent, is not very common amongſt men or women. But this exerciſe is the true cultivation of the underſtanding; and every thing conſpires to render the cultivation of the underſtanding more difficult in the female than the male world.

I am naturally led by this aſſertion to the main ſubject of the preſent chapter, and ſhall now attempt to point out ſome of the cauſes that degrade the ſex, and prevent women from generalizing their obſervations.

I ſhall not go back to the remote annals of antiquity to trace the hiſtory of woman; it is ſufficient to allow that ſhe has always been either a ſlave, or a deſpot, and to remark, that each of theſe ſituations equally retard the progreſs of reaſon. The grand ſource of female folly and vice has ever appeared to me to ariſe from narrowneſs of mind; and the very conſtitution of civil governments has put almoſt inſuperable obſtacles in the way to prevent the cultivation of the female underſtanding:—yet virtue can be built on no other foundation! The ſame obſtacles are thrown in the way of the rich, and the ſame conſequences enſue.

Neceſſity has been proverbially termed the mother of invention—the aphoriſm may be extended to virtue. It is an acquirement, and an acquirement to which pleaſure muſt be ſacrificed,—and who ſacrifices pleaſure when it is within the graſp, whoſe mind has not been opened and ſtrengthened by adverſity, or the purſuit of knowledge goaded on by neceſſity?—Happy is it when people have the cares of life to ſtruggle with; for theſe ſtruggles prevent their becoming a prey to enervating vices, merely from idleneſs! But, if from their birth men and women are placed in a torrid zone, with the meridian ſun of pleaſure darting directly upon them, how can they ſufficiently brace their minds to diſcharge the duties of life, or even to reliſh the affections that carry them out of themſelves?

Pleaſure is the buſineſs of woman's life, according to the preſent modification of ſociety, and while it continues to be ſo, little can be expected from ſuch weak beings. Inheriting, in a lineal deſcent from the firſt fair defect in nature, the ſovereignty of beauty, they have, to maintain their power, reſigned the natural rights, which the exerciſe of reaſon might have procured them, and choſen rather to be ſhort-lived queens than labour to obtain the ſober pleaſures that ariſe from equality. Exalted by their inferiority (this ſounds like a contradiction), they conſtantly demand homage as women, though experience ſhould teach them that the men who pride themſelves upon paying this arbitrary inſolent reſpect to the ſex, with the moſt ſcrupulous

exactneſs, are moſt inclined to tyrannize over, and deſpiſe, the very weakneſs they cheriſh. Often do they repeat Mr. Hume's ſentiments; when, comparing the French and Athenian character, he alludes to women. ‘But what is more ſingular in this whimſical nation, ſay I to the Athenians, is, that a frolick of yours during the Saturnalia, when the ſlaves are ſerved by their maſters, is, ſeriouſly continued by them through the whole year, and through the whole courſe of their lives; accompanied too with ſome circumſtances, which ſtill further augment the abſurdity and ridicule. Your ſport only elevates for a few days thoſe whom fortune has thrown down, and whom ſhe too, in ſport, may really elevate for ever above you. But this nation gravely exalts thoſe, whom nature has ſubjected to them, and whoſe inferiority and infirmities are abſolutely incurable. The women, though without virtue, are their maſters and ſovereigns.’

Ah! why do women, I write with affectionate ſolicitude, condeſcend to receive a degree of attention and reſpect from ſtrangers, different from that reciprocation of civility which

which the dictates of humanity and the politeneſs of civilization authoriſe between man and man? And, why do they not diſcover, when ‘ in the noon of beauty's power,’ that they are treated like queens only to be deluded by hollow reſpect, till they are led to reſign, or not aſſume, their natural prerogatives? Confined then in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themſelves, and ſtalk with mock majeſty from perch to perch. It is true they are provided with food and raiment, for which they neither toil nor ſpin; but health, liberty, and virtue, are given in exchange. But, where, amongſt mankind has been found ſufficient ſtrength of mind to enable a being to reſign theſe adventitious prerogatives; one who, riſing with the calm dignity of reaſon above opinion, dared to be proud of the privileges inherent in man? And it is vain to expect it whilſt hereditary power chokes the affections and nips reaſon in the bud.

The paſſions of men have thus placed women on thrones, and, till mankind become more reaſonable, it is to be feared that women will avail themſelves of the power which they attain with the leaſt exertion, and which

is the moſt indiſputable. They will ſmile, —yes, they will ſmile, though told that—

‘ In beauty's empire is no mean,
‘ And woman, either ſlave or queen,
‘ Is quickly ſcorn'd when not ador'd.

But the adoration comes firſt, and the ſcorn is not anticipated.

Lewis the XIVth, in particular, ſpread factitious manners, and caught, in a ſpecious way, the whole nation in his toils; for, eſtabliſhing an artful chain of deſpotiſm, he made it the intereſt of the people at large, individually to reſpect his ſtation and ſupport his power. And women, whom he flattered by a puerile attention to the whole ſex, obtained in his reign that prince-like diſtinction ſo fatal to reaſon and virtue.

A king is always a king—and a woman always a woman [*]: his authority and her ſex, ever ſtand between them and rational converſe. With a lover, I grant, ſhe ſhould be ſo, and her ſenſibility will naturally lead her to endeavour to excite emotion, not to gratify her vanity, but her heart. This I do not allow to be coquetry, it is the artleſs impulſe of nature, I only exclaim againſt the ſexual deſire of conqueſt when the heart is out of the queſtion.

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[*] And a wit, always a wit, might be added; for the vain fooleries of wits and beauties to obtain attention, and make conqueſts, are much upon a par.

This deſire is not confined to women; 'I have endeavoured,' ſays Lord Cheſterfield, 'to gain the hearts of twenty women, whoſe perſons I would not have given a fig for.' The libertine, who, in a guſt of paſſion, takes advantage of unſuſpecting tenderneſs, is a ſaint when compared with this cold-hearted raſcal; for I like to uſe ſignificant words. Yet only taught to pleaſe, women are always on the watch to pleaſe, and with true heroic ardour endeavour to gain hearts merely to reſign, or ſpurn them, when the victory is decided, and conſpicuous.

I muſt deſcend to the minutiæ of the ſubject.

I lament that women are ſyſtematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions, which men think it manly to pay to the ſex, when, in fact, they are inſultingly ſupporting their own ſuperiority. It is not condeſcenſion to bow to an inferior. So ludicrous, in fact, do theſe ceremonies appear to me, that I ſcarcely am able to govern my muſcles, when I ſee a man ſtart with eager, and ſerious ſolicitude to lift a handkerchief, or ſhut a door, when the *lady* could have done it herſelf, had ſhe only moved a pace or two.

A wild wiſh has juſt flown from my heart to my head, and I will not ſtifle it though it may excite a horſe-laugh.—I do earneſtly wiſh to ſee the diſtinction of ſex confounded in ſociety, unleſs where love animates the behaviour. For this diſtinction is, I am firmly perſuaded, the foundation of the weakneſs of character aſcribed to woman; is the cauſe why the underſtanding is neglected, whilſt accompliſhments are acquired with ſedulous care: and the ſame cauſe accounts for their preferring the graceful before the heroic virtues.

Mankind, including every deſcription, wiſh to be loved and reſpected for *ſomething*; and the common herd will always take the neareſt road to the completion of their wiſhes. The reſpect paid to wealth and beauty is the moſt certain, and unequivocal; and, of courſe, will always attract the vulgar eye of common minds. Abilities and virtues are abſolutely neceſſary to raiſe men from the middle rank of life into notice; and the natural conſequence is notorious, the middle rank contains moſt virtue and abilities. Men have thus, in one ſtation, at leaſt, an opportunity of exerting themſelves with dignity, and of riſing by the exertions which really improve a rational creature; but the whole female ſex are, till their character is formed, in the ſame condition as the rich: for they are born, I now ſpeak of a ſtate of civilization, with certain ſexual privileges, and whilſt they are gratuitouſly granted them, few will ever think of works of ſupererogation, to obtain the eſteem of a ſmall number of ſuperiour people.

When do we hear of women who, ſtarting out of obſcurity, boldly claim reſpect on account of their great abilities or daring virtues? Where are they to be found?—'To be 'obſerved, to be attended to, to be taken no-'tice of with ſympathy, complacency, and 'approbation, are all the advantages which 'they ſeek.'—True! my male readers will probably exclaim; but let them, before they draw any concluſion, recollect that this was not written originally as deſcriptive of women, but of the rich. In Dr. Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, I have found a general

general character of people of rank and fortune, that, in my opinion, might with the greateſt propriety be applied to the female ſex. I refer the ſagacious reader to the whole compariſon; but muſt be allowed to quote a paſſage to enforce an argument that I mean to inſiſt on, as the one moſt concluſive againſt a ſexual character. For if, excepting warriors, no great men, of any denomination, have ever appeared amongſt the nobility, may it not be fairly inferred that their local ſituation ſwallowed up the man, and produced a character ſimilar to that of women, who are *localized*, if I may be allowed the word, by the rank they are placed in, by *courteſy*? Women, commonly called Ladies, are not to be contradicted in company, are not allowed to exert any manual ſtrength; and from them the negative virtues only are expected, when any virtues are expected, patience, docility, good-humour, and flexibility; virtues incompatible with any vigorous exertion of intellect. Beſides, by living more with each other, and being ſeldom abſolutely alone, they are more under the influence of ſentiments than paſſions. Solitude and reflection are neceſſary to give to wiſhes the force of paſſions, and to enable the imagination to enlarge the object, and make it the moſt deſirable. The ſame may be ſaid of the rich; they do not ſufficiently deal in general ideas, collected by impaſſioned thinking, or calm inveſtigation, to acquire that ſtrength of character on which great reſolves are built. But hear what an acute obſerver ſays of the great.

'Do the great ſeem inſenſible of the eaſy price at which they may acquire the publick admiration; or do they ſeem to imagine that to them, as to other men, it muſt be the purchaſe either of ſweat or of blood? By what important accompliſhments is the young nobleman inſtructed to ſupport the dignity of his rank, and to render himſelf worthy of that ſuperiority over his fellow-citizens, to which the virtue of his anceſtors had raiſed them? Is it by knowledge, by induſtry, by patience, by ſelf-denial, or by virtue of any kind? As all his words, as all his motions are attended to, he learns an habitual regard to every circumſtance of ordinary behaviour, and ſtudies to perform all thoſe ſmall duties with the moſt exact propriety. As he is conſcious how much he is obſerved, and how much mankind are

' diſpoſed

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diſpoſed to favour all his inclinations, he acts, upon the moſt indifferent occaſions, with that freedom and elevation which the thought of this naturally inſpires. His air, his manner, his deportment, all mark that elegant and graceful ſenſe of his own ſuperiority, which thoſe who are born to inferior ſtation can hardly ever arrive at. Theſe are the arts by which he propoſes to make mankind more eaſily ſubmit to his authority, and to govern their inclinations according to his own pleaſure: and in this he is ſeldom diſappointed. Theſe arts, ſupported by rank and pre-eminence, are, upon ordinary occaſions, ſufficient to govern the world. Lewis XIV. during the greater part of his reign, was regarded, not only in France, but over all Europe, as the moſt perfect model of a great prince. But what were the talents and virtues by which he acquired this great reputation? Was it by the ſcrupulous and inflexible juſtice of all his undertakings, by the immenſe dangers and difficulties with which they were attended, or by the unwearied and unrelenting application with which he purſued them? Was it by his extenſive knowledge,

‘ by his exquiſite judgment, or by his heroic valour? It was by none of theſe qualities. But he was, firſt of all, the moſt powerful prince in Europe, and conſequently held the higheſt rank among kings; and then, ſays his hiſtorian, “ he ſurpaſſed all his courtiers in the gracefulneſs of his ſhape, and the majeſtic beauty of his features. The ſound of his voice, noble and affecting, gained thoſe hearts which his preſence intimidated. He had a ſtep and a deportment which could ſuit only him and his rank, and which would have been ridiculous in any other perſon. The embarraſſment which he occaſioned to thoſe who ſpoke to him, flattered that ſecret ſatiſfaction with which he felt his own ſuperiority.” ‘ Theſe frivolous accompliſhments, ſupported by his rank, and, no doubt too, by a degree of other talents and virtues, which ſeems, however, not to have been much above mediocrity, eſtabliſhed this prince in the eſteem of his own age, and have drawn, even from poſterity, a good deal of reſpect for his memory. Compared with theſe, in his own times, and in his own preſence, no other virtue,

it ſeems, appeared to have any merit. Knowledge, induſtry, valour, and beneficence, trembled, were abaſhed, and loſt all dignity before them.’

Woman alſo thus ‘ in herſelf complete,’ by poſſeſſing all theſe *frivolous* accompliſhments, ſo changes the nature of things

> ——— ‘ That what ſhe wills to do or ſay
> ‘ Seems wiſeſt, virtuouſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt;
> ‘ All higher knowledge in *her preſence* falls
> ‘ Degraded. Wiſdom in diſcourſe with her
> ‘ Loſes diſcountenanc’d, and, like Folly, ſhows;
> ‘ Authority and Reaſon on her wait.’—

And all this is built on her lovelineſs!

In the middle rank of life, to continue the compariſon, men, in their youth, are prepared for profeſſions, and marriage is not conſidered as the grand feature in their lives; whilſt women, on the contrary, have no other ſcheme to ſharpen their faculties. It is not buſineſs, extenſive plans, or any of the excurſive flights of ambition, that engroſs their attention; no, their thoughts are not employed in rearing ſuch noble ſtructures. To riſe in the world, and have the liberty of running from pleaſure to pleaſure, they muſt marry advantageouſly, and to this object their time is ſacrificed, and their perſons often legally proſtituted. A man when he enters any profeſſion has his eye ſteadily fixed on ſome future advantage (and the mind gains great ſtrength by having all its efforts directed to one point), and, full of his buſineſs, pleaſure is conſidered as mere relaxation; whilſt women ſeek for pleaſure as the main purpoſe of exiſtence. In fact, from the education, which they receive from ſociety, the love of pleaſure may be ſaid to govern them all; but does this prove that there is a ſex in ſouls? It would be juſt as rational to declare that the courtiers in France, when a deſtructive ſyſtem of deſpotiſm had formed their character, were not men, becauſe liberty, virtue, and humanity, were ſacrificed to pleaſure and vanity.—Fatal paſſions, which have ever domineered over the *whole* race!

The ſame love of pleaſure, foſtered by the whole tendency of their education, gives a trifling turn to the conduct of women in moſt circumſtances: for inſtance, they are ever anxious about ſecondary things; and on the watch for adventures, inſtead of being occupied by duties.

A man, when he undertakes a journey, has, in general, the end in view; a woman thinks

more of the incidental occurrences, the ſtrange things that may poſſibly occur on the road; the impreſſion that ſhe may make on her fellow-travellers; and, above all, ſhe is anxiouſly intent on the care of the finery that ſhe carries with her, which is more than ever a part of herſelf, when going to figure on a new ſcene; when, to uſe an apt French turn of expreſſion, ſhe is going to produce a ſenſation.—Can dignity of mind exiſt with ſuch trivial cares?

In ſhort, women, in general, as well as the rich of both ſexes, have acquired all the follies and vices of civilization, and miſſed the uſeful fruit. It is not neceſſary for me always to premiſe, that I ſpeak of the condition of the whole ſex, leaving exceptions out of the queſtion. Their ſenſes are inflamed, and their underſtandings neglected, conſequently they become the prey of their ſenſes, delicately termed ſenſibility, and are blown about by every momentary guſt of feeling. They are, therefore, in a much worſe condition than they would be in were they in a ſtate nearer to nature. Ever reſtleſs and anxious, their over exerciſed ſenſibility not only renders them uncomfortable themſelves, but troubleſome, to uſe a ſoft phraſe, to others.

All their thoughts turn on things calculated to excite emotion; and feeling, when they ſhould reaſon, their conduct is unſtable, and their opinions are wavering—not the wavering produced by deliberation or progreſſive views, but by contradictory emotions. By fits and ſtarts they are warm in many purſuits; yet this warmth, never concentrated into perſeverance, ſoon exhauſts itſelf; exhaled by its own heat, or meeting with ſome other fleeting paſſion, to which reaſon has never given any ſpecific gravity, neutrality enſues. Miſerable, indeed, muſt be that being whoſe cultivation of mind has only tended to inflame its paſſions! A diſtinction ſhould be made between inflaming and ſtrengthening them. The paſſions thus pampered, whilſt the judgment is left unformed, what can be expected to enſue?—Undoubtedly, a mixture of madneſs and folly!

This obſervation ſhould not be confined to the *fair* ſex; however, at preſent, I only mean to apply it to them.

Novels, muſic, poetry, and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of ſenſation, and their character is thus formed during the time they are acquiring accompliſhments, the only improvement they are ex-

cited, by their ſtation in ſociety, to acquire. This overſtretched ſenſibility naturally relaxes the other powers of the mind, and prevents intellect from attaining that ſovereignty which it ought to attain to render a rational creature uſeful to others, and content with its own ſtation: for the exerciſe of the underſtanding, as life advances, is the only method pointed out by nature to calm the paſſions.

Satiety has a very different effect, and I have often been forcibly ſtruck by an emphatical deſcription of damnation:—when the ſpirit is repreſented as continually hovering with abortive eagerneſs round the defiled body, unable to enjoy any thing without the organs of ſenſe. Yet, to their ſenſes, are women made ſlaves, becauſe it is by their ſenſibility that they obtain preſent power.

And will moraliſts pretend to aſſert, that this is the condition in which one half of the human race ſhould be encouraged to remain with liſtleſs inactivity and ſtupid acquieſcence? Kind inſtructors! what were we created for? To remain, it may be ſaid, innocent; they mean in a ſtate of childhood.—We might as well never have been born, unleſs it were neceſſary that we ſhould be created to enable man to acquire the noble privilege of reaſon, the power of diſcerning good from evil, whilſt we lie down in the duſt from whence we were taken, never to riſe again.—

It would be an endleſs taſk to trace the variety of meanneſſes, cares, and ſorrows, into which women are plunged by the prevailing opinion, that they were created rather to feel than reaſon, and that all the power they obtain, muſt be obtained by their charms and weakneſs :

> ‘ Fine by defect, and amiably weak !’

And, made by this amiable weakneſs entirely dependent, excepting what they gain by illicit ſway, on man, not only for protection, but advice, is it ſurpriſing that, neglecting the duties that reaſon alone points out, and ſhrinking from trials calculated to ſtrengthen their minds, they only exert themſelves to give their defects a graceful covering, which may ſerve to heighten their charms in the eye of the voluptuary, though it ſink them below the ſcale of moral excellence?

Fragile in every ſenſe of the word, they are obliged to look up to man for every comfort. In the moſt trifling dangers they cling to their ſupport, with paraſitical tenacity, piteouſly demanding ſuccour; and their *natural* protector extends his arm, or lifts up his voice, to guard the lovely trembler—from what? Perhaps the frown of an old cow, or the jump of a mouſe; a rat, would be a ſerious danger. In the name of reaſon, and even common ſenſe, what can ſave ſuch beings from contempt; even though they be ſoft and fair?

Theſe fears, when not affected, may be very pretty; but they ſhew a degree of imbecility that degrades a rational creature in a way women are not aware of—for love and eſteem are very diſtinct things.

I am fully perſuaded that we ſhould hear of none of theſe infantine airs, if girls were allowed to take ſufficient exerciſe, and not confined in cloſe rooms till their muſcles are relaxed, and their powers of digeſtion deſtroyed. To carry the remark ſtill further, if fear in girls, inſtead of being cheriſhed, perhaps, created, was treated in the ſame manner as cowardice in boys, we ſhould quickly ſee women with more dignified aſpects. It is true, they could not then with equal propriety be termed the ſweet flowers that ſmile in the walk of man; but they would be more reſpectable members of ſociety, and diſcharge the important duties of life by the light of their own reaſon. 'Educate women like men,' ſays Rouſſeau, 'and the more they reſemble our ſex the leſs power will they have over us.' This is the very point I aim at. I do not wiſh them to have power over men; but over themſelves.

In the ſame ſtrain have I heard men argue againſt inſtructing the poor; for many are the forms that ariſtocracy aſſumes. 'Teach them to read and write,' ſay they, 'and you take them out of the ſtation aſſigned them by nature.' An eloquent Frenchman has anſwered them, I will borrow his ſentiments. But they know not, when they make man a brute, that they may expect every inſtant to ſee him transformed into a ferocious beaſt. Without knowledge there can be no morality!

Ignorance is a frail baſe for virtue! Yet, that it is the condition for which woman was organized, has been inſiſted upon by the writers who have moſt vehemently argued in favour of the ſuperiority of man; a ſuperiority not in degree, but eſſence;' though, to ſoften the argument, they have laboured to prove, with chivalrous generoſity, that the ſexes ought not to be compared; man was made to reaſon, woman to feel: and that together, fleſh and ſpirit, they make the moſt perfect whole, by blending happily reaſon and ſenſibility into one character.

And what is ſenſibility? 'Quickneſs of ſenſation; quickneſs of perception; delicacy.' Thus is it defined by Dr. Johnſon; and the definition gives me no other idea than of the moſt exquiſitely poliſhed inſtinct. I diſcern not a trace of the image of God in either ſenſation or matter. Refined ſeventy times ſeven, they are ſtill material; intellect dwells not there; nor will fire ever make lead gold!

I come round to my old argument; if woman be allowed to have an immortal ſoul, ſhe muſt have, as the employment of life, an underſtanding to improve. And when, to render the preſent ſtate more complete, though every thing proves it to be but a fraction of a mighty ſum, ſhe is incited by preſent gratification to forget her grand deſtination, Nature is counteracted, or ſhe was born only to procreate and rot. Or, granting brutes, of every deſcription, a ſoul, though not a reaſonable one, the exerciſe of inſtinct and ſenſibility may be the ſtep, which they are to take, in this life, towards the attainment of reaſon in the next; ſo that through all eternity they will lag behind man, who, why we cannot tell, had the power given him of attaining reaſon in his firſt mode of exiſtence.

When I treat of the peculiar duties of women, as I ſhould treat of the peculiar duties of a citizen or father, it will be found that I do not mean to inſinuate that they ſhould be taken out of their families, ſpeaking of the majority. ‘He that hath wife and children,’ ſays Lord Bacon, ‘hath given hoſtages to ‘fortune; for they are impediments to great ‘enterpriſes, either of virtue or miſchief. ‘Certainly the beſt works, and of greateſt ‘merit for the public, have proceeded from ‘the unmarried or childleſs men.’ I ſay the ſame of women. But, the welfare of ſociety is not built on extraordinary exertions; and were it more reaſonably organized, there would be ſtill leſs need of great abilities, or heroic virtues.

In the regulation of a family, in the education of children, underſtanding, in an unſophiſticated ſenſe, is particularly required: ſtrength both of body and mind; yet the men who, by their writings, have moſt earneſtly laboured to domeſticate women, have endeavoured, by arguments dictated by a groſs appetite, that ſatiety had rendered faſtidious, to weaken their bodies and cramp their minds. But, if even by theſe ſiniſter methods they really *perſuaded* women, by working on their feelings, to ſtay at home, and fulfil the duties of a mother and miſtreſs of a family, I ſhould cautiouſly oppoſe opinions that led women to right conduct, by prevailing on them to make the diſcharge of a duty the buſineſs of life, though reaſon were inſulted. Yet, and I appeal to experience, if by neglecting the underſtanding they are as much, nay, more detached from theſe domeſtic duties, than they could be by the moſt ſerious intellectual purſuit, though it may be obſerved, that the maſs of mankind will never vigorouſly purſue an intellectual object *, I may be allowed to infer that reaſon is abſolutely neceſſary to enable a woman to perform any duty properly, and I muſt again repeat, that ſenſibility is not reaſon.

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* The maſs of mankind are rather the ſlaves of their appetites than of their paſſions.

The compariſon with the rich ſtill occurs to me; for, when men neglect the duties of humanity, women will do the ſame; a common ſtream hurries them both along with thoughtleſs celerity. Riches and honours prevent a man from enlarging his underſtanding, and enervate all his powers by reverſing the order of nature, which has ever made true pleaſure the reward of labour. Pleaſure—enervating pleaſure is, likewiſe, within women's reach without earning it. But, till hereditary poſſeſſions are ſpread abroad, how can we expect men to be proud of virtue? And, till they are, women will govern them by the moſt direct means, neglecting their dull domeſtic duties to catch the pleaſure that is on the wing of time.

'The power of the woman,' ſays ſome author, 'is her ſenſibility;' and men, not aware of the conſequence, do all they can to make this power ſwallow up every other. Thoſe who conſtantly employ their ſenſibility will have moſt: for example; poets,

painters, and compoſers[*]. Yet, when the ſenſibility is thus increaſed at the expence of reaſon, and even the imagination, why do philoſophical men complain of their fickleneſs? The ſexual attention of man particularly acts on female ſenſibility, and this ſympathy has been exerciſed from their youth up. A huſband cannot long pay thoſe attentions with the paſſion neceſſary to excite lively emotions, and the heart, accuſtomed to lively emotions, turns to a new lover, or pines in ſecret, the prey of virtue or prudence. I mean when the heart has really been rendered ſuſceptible, and the taſte formed; for I am apt to conclude, from what I have ſeen in faſhionable life, that vanity is oftener ſoſtered than ſenſibility by the mode of education, and the intercourſe between the ſexes, which I have reprobated; and that coquetry more frequently proceeds from vanity than from that inconſtancy, which overſtrained ſenſibility naturally produces.

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[*] Men of this deſcription pour it into their compoſitions, to amalgamate the groſs materials; and, moulding them with paſſion, give to the inert body a ſoul; but, in woman's imagination, love alone concentrates theſe ethereal beams.

Another argument that has had a great weight with me, muſt, I think, have ſome force with every conſiderate, benevolent heart. Girls who have been thus weakly educated, are often cruelly left by their parents without any proviſion; and, of courſe, are dependent on, not only the reaſon, but the bounty of their brothers. Theſe brothers are, to view the faireſt ſide of the queſtion, good ſort of men, and give as a favour, what children of the ſame parents had an equal right to. In this equivocal humiliating ſituation, a docile female may remain ſome time, with a tolerable degree of comfort. But, when the brother marries, a probable circumſtance, from being conſidered as the miſtreſs of the family, ſhe is viewed with averted looks as an intruder, an unneceſſary burden on the benevolence of the maſter of the houſe, and his new partner.

Who can recount the miſery, which many unfortunate beings, whoſe minds and bodies are equally weak, ſuffer in ſuch ſituations—unable to work, and aſhamed to beg? The wife, a cold-hearted, narrow-minded, woman, and this is not an unfair ſuppoſition; for the preſent mode of education does not tend to enlarge the heart any more than the underſtanding, is jealous of the little kindneſs which her huſband ſhews to his relations; and her ſenſibility not riſing to humanity, ſhe is diſpleaſed at ſeeing the property of *her* children laviſhed on an helpleſs ſiſter.

Theſe are matters of fact, which have come under my eye, again and again. The conſequence is obvious, the wife has recourſe to cunning to undermine the habitual affection, which ſhe is afraid openly to oppoſe; and neither tears nor careſſes are ſpared till the ſpy is worked out of her home, and thrown on the world, unprepared for its difficulties; or ſent, as a great effort of generoſity, or from ſome regard to propriety, with a ſmall ſtipend, and an uncultivated mind, into joyleſs ſolitude.

Theſe two women may be much upon a par, with reſpect to reaſon and humanity; and changing ſituations, might have acted juſt the ſame ſelfiſh part; but had they been differently educated, the caſe would alſo have been very different. The wife would not have had that ſenſibility, of which ſelf is the centre, and reaſon might have taught her not to expect, and not even to be flattered, by the affection of her huſband, if it led him to violate prior duties. She would wiſh not to love him merely becauſe he loved her, but on account of his virtues; and the ſiſter might have been able to ſtruggle for herſelf inſtead of eating the bitter bread of dependence.

I am, indeed, perſuaded that the heart, as well as the underſtanding, is opened by cultivation; and by, which may not appear ſo clear, ſtrengthening the organs; I am not now talking of momentary flaſhes of ſenſibility, but of affections. And, perhaps, in the education of both ſexes, the moſt difficult taſk is ſo to adjuſt inſtruction as not to narrow the underſtanding, whilſt the heart is warmed by the generous juices of ſpring, juſt raiſed by the electric fermentation of the ſeaſon; nor to dry up the feelings by employing the mind in inveſtigations remote from life.

With reſpect to women, when they receive a careful education, they are either made fine ladies, brimful of ſenſibility, and teeming with capricious fancies; or mere notable women. The latter are often friendly, honeſt creatures, and have a ſhrewd kind of good ſenſe joined with worldly prudence, that often render them more uſeful members of ſociety

than the fine ſentimental lady, though they poſſeſs neither greatneſs of mind nor taſte. The intellectual world is ſhut againſt them; take them out of their family or neighbourhood, and they ſtand ſtill; the mind finding no employment, for literature affords a fund of amuſement which they have never ſought to reliſh, but frequently to deſpiſe. The ſentiments and taſte of more cultivated minds appear ridiculous, even in thoſe whom chance and family connections have led them to love; but in mere acquaintance they think it all affectation.

A man of ſenſe can only love ſuch a woman on account of her ſex, and reſpect her, becauſe ſhe is a truſty ſervant. He lets her, to preſerve his own peace, ſcold the ſervants, and go to church in clothes made of the very beſt materials. A man of her own ſize of underſtanding would, probably, not agree ſo well with her; for he might wiſh to encroach on her prerogative, and manage ſome domeſtic concerns himſelf. Yet women, whoſe minds are not enlarged by cultivation, or the natural ſelfiſhneſs of ſenſibility expanded by reflection, are very unfit to manage a family; for, by an undue ſtretch of power, they are always tyrannizing to ſupport a ſuperiority that only reſts on the arbitrary diſtinction of fortune. The evil is ſometimes more ſerious, and domeſtics are deprived of innocent indulgences, and made to work beyond their ſtrength, in order to enable the notable woman to keep a better table, and outſhine her neighbours in finery and parade. If ſhe attend to her children, it is, in general, to dreſs them in a coſtly manner—and, whether this attention ariſes from vanity or fondneſs, it is equally pernicious.

Beſides, how many women of this deſcription paſs their days; or, at leaſt, their evenings, diſcontentedly. Their huſbands acknowledge that they are good managers, and chaſte wives; but leave home to ſeek for more agreeable, may I be allowed to uſe a ſignificant French word, *piquant* ſociety; and the patient drudge, who fulfils her taſk, like a blind horſe in a mill, is defrauded of her juſt reward; for the wages due to her are the careſſes of her huſband; and women who have ſo few reſources in themſelves, do not very patiently bear this privation of a natural right.

A fine lady, on the contrary, has been

taught to look down with contempt on the vulgar employments of life; though ſhe has only been incited to acquire accompliſhments that riſe a degree above ſenſe; for even corporeal accompliſhments cannot be acquired with any degree of preciſion unleſs the underſtanding has been ſtrengthened by exerciſe. Without a foundation of principles taſte is ſuperficial; and grace muſt ariſe from ſomething deeper than imitation. The imagination, however, is heated, and the feelings rendered faſtidious, if not ſophiſticated; or, a counterpoiſe of judgment is not acquired, when the heart ſtill remains artleſs, though it becomes too tender.

Theſe women are often amiable; and their hearts are really more ſenſible to general benevolence, more alive to the ſentiments that civilize life, than the ſquare-elbowed family drudge; but, wanting a due proportion of reflection and ſelf-government, they only inſpire love; and are the miſtreſſes of their huſbands, whilſt they have any hold on their affections; and the platonic friends of his male acquaintance. Theſe are the fair defects in nature; the women who appear to be created not to enjoy the fellowſhip of man, but to ſave him from ſinking into abſolute brutality, by rubbing off the rough angles of his character; and by playful dalliance to give ſome dignity to the appetite that draws him to them.—Gracious Creator of the whole human race! haſt thou created ſuch a being as woman, who can trace thy wiſdom in thy works, and feel that thou alone art by thy nature, exalted above her,—for no better purpoſe?—Can ſhe believe that ſhe was only made to ſubmit to man, her equal; a being, who, like her, was ſent into the world to acquire virtue?—Can ſhe conſent to be occupied merely to pleaſe him; merely to adorn the earth, when her ſoul is capable of riſing to thee?—And can ſhe reſt ſupinely dependent on man for reaſon, when ſhe ought to mount with him the arduous ſteeps of knowledge?—

Yet, if love be the ſupreme good, let women be only educated to inſpire it, and let every charm be poliſhed to intoxicate the ſenſes; but, if they are moral beings, let them have a chance to become intelligent; and let love to man be only a part of that glowing flame of univerſal love, which, after encircling humanity, mounts in grateful incenſe to God.

To fulfil domeſtic duties much reſolution is neceſſary, and a ſerious kind of perſeverance that requires a more firm ſupport than emotions, however lively and true to nature. To give an example of order, the ſoul of virtue, ſome auſterity of behaviour muſt be adopted, ſcarcely to be expected from a being who, from its infancy, has been made the weathercock of its own ſenſations. Whoever rationally means to be uſeful muſt have a plan of conduct; and, in the diſcharge of the ſimpleſt duty, we are often obliged to act contrary to the preſent impulſe of tenderneſs or compaſſion. Severity is frequently the moſt certain, as well as the moſt ſublime proof of affection; and the want of this power over the feelings, and of that lofty, dignified affection, which makes a perſon prefer the future good of the beloved object to a preſent gratification, is the reaſon why ſo many fond mothers ſpoil their children, and has made it queſtionable whether negligence or indulgence is moſt hurtful: but I am inclined to think, that the latter has done moſt harm.

Mankind ſeem to agree that children ſhould be left under the management of women during their childhood. Now, from all the obſervation

ſervation that I have been able to make, women of ſenſibility are the moſt unfit for this taſk, becauſe they will infallibly, carried away by their feelings, ſpoil a child's temper. The management of the temper, the firſt, and moſt important branch of education, requires the ſober ſteady eye of reaſon; a plan of conduct equally diſtant from tyranny and indulgence: yet theſe are the extremes that people of ſenſibility alternately fall into; always ſhooting beyond the mark. I have followed this train of reaſoning much further, till I have concluded, that a perſon of genius is the moſt improper perſon to be employed in education, public or private. Minds of this rare ſpecies ſee things too much in maſſes, and ſeldom, if ever, have a good temper. That habitual cheerfulneſs, termed good-humour, is, perhaps, as ſeldom united with great mental powers, as with ſtrong feelings. And thoſe people who follow, with intereſt and admiration, the flights of genius; or, with cooler approbation ſuck in the inſtruction which has been elaborately prepared for them by the profound thinker, ought not to be diſguſted, if they find the former choleric, and the latter moroſe; becauſe livelineſs of fancy, and

a tenacious comprehenſion of mind, are ſcarcely compatible with that pliant urbanity which leads a man, at leaſt, to bend to the opinions and prejudices of others, inſtead of roughly confronting them.

But, treating of education or manners, minds of a ſuperior claſs are not to be conſidered, they may be left to chance; it is the multitude, with moderate abilities, who call for inſtruction, and catch the colour of the atmoſphere they breathe. This reſpectable concourſe, I contend, men and women, ſhould not have their ſenſations heightened in the hot-bed of luxurious indolence, at the expence of their underſtanding; for, unleſs there be a ballaſt of underſtanding, they will never become either virtuous or free: an ariſtocracy, founded on property, or ſterling talents, will ever ſweep before it, the alternately timid, and ferocious, ſlaves of feeling.

Numberleſs are the arguments, to take another view of the ſubject, brought forward with a ſhew of reaſon; becauſe ſuppoſed to be deduced from nature, that men have uſed morally and phyſically, to degrade the ſex. I muſt notice a few.

The female underſtanding has often been ſpoken of with contempt, as arriving ſooner at maturity than the male. I ſhall not anſwer this argument by alluding to the early proofs of reaſon, as well as genius, in Cowley, Milton, and Pope *, but only appeal to experience to decide whether young men, who are early introduced into company (and examples now abound), do not acquire the ſame precocity. So notorious is this fact, that the bare mentioning of it muſt bring before people, who at all mix in the world, the idea of a number of ſwaggering apes of men, whoſe underſtandings are narrowed by being brought into the ſociety of men when they ought to have been ſpinning a top or twirling a hoop.

It has alſo been aſſerted, by ſome naturaliſts, that men do not attain their full growth and ſtrength till thirty; but that women arrive at maturity by twenty. I apprehend that they reaſon on falſe ground, led aſtray by the male prejudice, which deems beauty the perfection of woman—mere beauty of features and complexion, the vulgar acceptation of the word, whilſt male beauty is allowed to

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* Many other names might be added.

have ſome connection with the mind. Strength of body, and that character of countenance, which the French term a *phyſionomie*, women do not acquire before thirty, any more than men. The little artleſs tricks of children, it is true, are particularly pleaſing and attractive; yet, when the pretty freſhneſs of youth is worn off, theſe artleſs graces become ſtudied airs, and diſguſt every perſon of taſte. In the countenance of girls we only look for vivacity and baſhful modeſty; but, the ſpring-tide of life over, we look for ſoberer ſenſe in the face, and for traces of paſſion, inſtead of the dimples of animal ſpirits; expecting to ſee individuality of character, the only faſtener of the affections *. We then wiſh to converſe, not to fondle; to give ſcope to our imaginations as well as to the ſenſations of our hearts.

At twenty the beauty of both ſexes is equal; but the libertiniſm of man leads him to make the diſtinction, and ſuperannuated coquettes are commonly of the ſame opinion; for, when they can no longer inſpire love, they pay for the vigour and vivacity of youth. The French, who admit more of mind into their notions of beauty, give the preference to women of thirty. I mean to ſay that they allow women to be in their moſt perfect ſtate, when vivacity gives place to reaſon, and to that mageſtic ſeriouſneſs of character, which marks maturity;—or, the reſting point. In youth, till twenty, the body ſhoots out, till thirty the ſolids are attaining a degree of denſity; and the flexible muſcles, growing daily more rigid, give character to the countenance; that is, they trace the operations of the mind with the iron pen of fate, and tell us not only what powers are within, but how they have been employed.

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* The ſtrength of an affection is, generally, in the ſame proportion as the character of the ſpecies in the object beloved, is loſt in that of the individual.

It is proper to obſerve, that animals who arrive ſlowly at maturity, are the longeſt lived, and of the nobleſt ſpecies. Men cannot, however, claim any natural ſuperiority from the grandeur of longevity; for in this reſpect nature has not diſtinguiſhed the male.

Polygamy is another phyſical degradation; and a plauſible argument for a cuſtom, that blaſts every domeſtic virtue, is drawn from the well-atteſted fact, that in the countries

where it is eſtabliſhed, more females are born than males. This appears to be an indication of nature, and to nature, apparently reaſonable ſpeculations muſt yield. A further concluſion obviouſly preſented itſelf; if polygamy be neceſſary, woman muſt be inferior to man, and made for him.

With reſpect to the formation of the fetus in the womb, we are very ignorant; but it appears to me probable, that an accidental phyſical cauſe may account for this phenomenon, and prove it not to be a law of nature. I have met with ſome pertinent obſervations on the ſubject in Forſter's Account of the Iſles of the South-Sea, that will explain my meaning. After obſerving that of the two ſexes amongſt animals, the moſt vigorous and hotteſt conſtitution always prevails, and produces its kind; he adds,—‘ If this be applied to the inhabitants of Africa, it is evident that the men there, accuſtomed to polygamy, are enervated by the uſe of ſo many women, and therefore leſs vigorous; the women, on the contrary, are of a hotter conſtitution, not only on account of their more irritable nerves, more ſenſible organization, and more lively fancy; but likewiſe becauſe 'they are deprived in their matrimony of that ſhare of phyſical love which, in a monogamous condition, would all be theirs; and thus, for the above reaſons, the generality of children are born females.'

'In the greater part of Europe it has been proved by the moſt accurate liſts of mortality, that the proportion of men to women is nearly equal, or, if any difference takes place, the males born are more numerous, in the proportion of 105 to 100.'

The neceſſity of polygamy, therefore, does not appear; yet when a man ſeduces a woman, it ſhould, I think, be termed a *left-handed* marriage, and the man ſhould be *legally* obliged to maintain the woman and her children, unleſs adultery, a natural divorcement, abrogated the law. And this law ſhould remain in force as long as the weakneſs of women cauſed the word ſeduction to be uſed as an excuſe for their frailty and want of principle; nay, while they depend on man for a ſubſiſtence, inſtead of earning it by the exertion of their own hands or heads. But theſe women ſhould not, in the full meaning of the relationſhip, be termed wives, or the very purpoſe of marriage would be ſubverted, and all thoſe endearing charities that flow from perſonal fidelity, and give a ſanctity to the tie, when neither love nor friendſhip unites the hearts, would melt into ſelfiſhneſs. The woman who is faithful to the father of her children demands reſpect, and ſhould not be treated like a proſtitute; though I readily grant that if it be neceſſary for a man and woman to live together in order to bring up their offspring, nature never intended that a man ſhould have more than one wife.

Still, highly as I reſpect marriage, as the foundation of almoſt every ſocial virtue, I cannot avoid feeling the moſt lively compaſſion for thoſe unfortunate females who are broken off from ſociety, and by one error torn from all thoſe affections and relationſhips that improve the heart and mind. It does not frequently even deſerve the name of error; for many innocent girls become the dupes of a ſincere, affectionate heart, and ſtill more are, as it may emphatically be termed, *ruined* before they know the difference between virtue and vice:—and thus prepared by their education for infamy, they become infamous. Aſylums and Magdalenes are not the proper remedies for theſe abuſes. It is juſtice, not charity, that is wanting in the world!

A woman who has loſt her honour, imagines that ſhe cannot fall lower, and as for recovering her former ſtation, it is impoſſible; no exertion can waſh this ſtain away. Loſing thus every ſpur, and having no other means of ſupport, proſtitution becomes her only refuge, and the character is quickly depraved by circumſtances over which the poor wretch has little power, unleſs ſhe poſſeſſes an uncommon portion of ſenſe and loftineſs of ſpirit. Neceſſity never makes proſtitution the buſineſs of men's lives; though numberleſs are the women who are thus rendered ſyſtematically vicious. This, however, ariſes, in a great degree, from the ſtate of idleneſs in which women are educated, who are always taught to look up to man for a maintenance, and to conſider their perſons as the proper return for his exertions to ſupport them. Meretricious airs, and the whole ſcience of wantonneſs, has then a more powerful ſtimulus than either appetite or vanity; and this remark gives force to the prevailing opinion, that with chaſtity all is loſt that is reſpectable in woman. Her character depends on

the obſervance of one virtue, though the only paſſion foſtered in her heart—is love. Nay, the honour of a woman is not made even to depend on her will.

When Richardſon[*] makes Clariſſa tell Lovelace that he had robbed her of her honour, he muſt have had ſtrange notions of honour and virtue. For, miſerable beyond all names of miſery is the condition of a being, who could be degraded without its own conſent! This exceſs of ſtrictneſs I have heard vindicated as a ſalutary error. I ſhall anſwer in the words of Leibnitz—'Errors are often uſeful; but it is commonly to remedy other errors.'

Moſt of the evils of life ariſe from a deſire of preſent enjoyment that outruns itſelf. The obedience required of women in the marriage ſtate comes under this deſcription; the mind, naturally weakened by depending on authority, never exerts its own powers, and the obedient wife is thus rendered a weak indolent mother. Or, ſuppoſing that this is not always the conſequence, a future ſtate of exiſtence is ſcarcely taken into the reckoning when only negative virtues are cultivated. For, in treating of morals, particularly when women are alluded to, writers have too often conſidered virtue in a very limited ſenſe, and made the foundation of it *ſolely* worldly utility; nay, a ſtill more fragile baſe has been given to this ſtupendous fabric, and the wayward fluctuating feelings of men have been made the ſtandard of virtue. Yes, virtue as well as religion, has been ſubjected to the deciſions of taſte.

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[*] Dr. Young ſupports the ſame opinion, in his plays, when he talks of the misfortune that ſhunned the light of day.

It would almoſt provoke a ſmile of contempt, if the vain abſurdities of man did not ſtrike us on all ſides, to obſerve, how eager men are to degrade the ſex from whom they pretend to receive the chief pleaſure of life; and I have frequently with full conviction retorted Pope's ſarcaſm on them; or, to ſpeak explicitly, it has appeared to me applicable to the whole human race. A love of pleaſure or ſway ſeems to divide mankind, and the huſband who lords it in his little harem thinks only of his pleaſure or his convenience. To ſuch lengths, indeed, does an intemperate love of pleaſure carry ſome prudent men, or worn out libertines, who marry to have a ſafe bed-fellow, that they ſeduce their own

wives.—Hymen baniſhes modeſty, and chaſte love takes its flight.

Love, conſidered as an animal appetite, cannot long feed on itſelf without expiring. And this extinction, in its own flame, may be termed the violent death of love. But the wife who has thus been rendered licentious, will probably endeavour to fill the void left by the loſs of her huſband's attentions; for ſhe cannot contentedly become merely an upper ſervant after having been treated like a goddeſs. She is ſtill handſome, and, inſtead of transferring her fondneſs to her children, ſhe only dreams of enjoying the ſunſhine of life. Beſides, there are many huſbands ſo devoid of ſenſe and parental affection, that during the firſt efferveſcence of voluptuous fondneſs they refuſe to let their wives ſuckle their children. They are only to dreſs and live to pleaſe them: and love—even innocent love, ſoon ſinks into laſciviouſneſs when the exerciſe of a duty is ſacrificed to its indulgence.

Perſonal attachment is a very happy foundation for friendſhip; yet, when even two virtuous young people marry, it would, perhaps, be happy if ſome circumſtances checked their paſſion ; if the recollection of ſome prior attachment, or diſappointed affection, made it on one ſide, at leaſt, rather a match founded on eſteem. In that caſe they would look beyond the preſent moment, and try to render the whole of life reſpectable, by forming a plan to regulate a friendſhip which only death ought to diſſolve.

Friendſhip is a ſerious affection ; the moſt ſublime of all affections, becauſe it is founded on principle, and cemented by time. The very reverſe may be ſaid of love. In a great degree, love and friendſhip cannot ſubſiſt in the ſame boſom ; even when inſpired by different objects they weaken or deſtroy each other, and for the ſame object can only be felt in ſucceſſion. The vain fears and fond jealouſies, the winds which fan the flame of love, when judiciouſly or artfully tempered, are both incompatible with the tender confidence and ſincere reſpect of friendſhip.

Love, ſuch as the glowing pen of genius has traced, exiſts not on earth, or only reſides in thoſe exalted, fervid imaginations that have ſketched ſuch dangerous pictures. Dangerous, becauſe they not only afford a plauſible excuſe, to the voluptuary who diſguiſes ſheer

ſenſuality under a ſentimental veil; but as they ſpread affectation, and take from the dignity of virtue. Virtue, as the very word imports, ſhould have an appearance of ſeriouſneſs, if not auſterity ; and to endeavour to trick her out in the garb of pleaſure, becauſe the epithet has been uſed as another name for beauty, is to exalt her on a quickſand; a moſt inſidious attempt to haſten her fall by apparent reſpect. Virtue and pleaſure are not, in fact, ſo nearly allied in this life as ſome eloquent writers have laboured to prove. Pleaſure prepares the fading wreath, and mixes the intoxicating cup ; but the fruit which virtue gives, is the recompence of toil: and, gradually ſeen as it ripens, only affords calm ſatisfaction ; nay, appearing to be the reſult of the natural tendency of things, it is ſcarcely obſerved. Bread, the common food of life, ſeldom thought of as a bleſſing, ſupports the conſtitution and preſerves health ; ſtill feaſts delight the heart of man, though diſeaſe and even death lurk in the cup or dainty that elevates the ſpirits or tickles the palate. The lively heated imagination, in the ſame ſtyle, draws the picture of love, as it draws every other picture, with thoſe glowing colours, which the daring hand will ſteal from the rainbow that is directed by a mind, condemned in a world like this, to prove its noble origin by panting after unattainable perfection; ever purſuing what it acknowledges to be a fleeting dream. An imagination of this vigorous caſt can give exiſtence to inſubſtantial forms, and ſtability to the ſhadowy reveries which the mind naturally falls into when realities are found vapid. It can then depict love with celeſtial charms, and dote on the grand ideal object—it can imagine a degree of mutual affection that ſhall refine the ſoul, and not expire when it has ſerved as a ‘ ſcale to heavenly;’ and, like devotion, make it abſorb every meaner affection and deſire. In each others arms, as in a temple, with its ſummit loſt in the clouds, the world is to be ſhut out, and every thought and wiſh, that do not nurture pure affection and permanent virtue.—Permanent virtue! alas! Rouſſeau, reſpectable viſionary! thy paradiſe would ſoon be violated by the entrance of ſome unexpected gueſt. Like Milton's it would only contain angels, or men ſunk below the dignity of rational creatures. Happineſs is not material, it cannot be ſeen or felt! Yet the eager purſuit of the good which every one ſhapes to his own fancy, proclaims man the lord of this lower world, and to be an intelligential creature, who is not to receive, but acquire happineſs. They, therefore, who complain of the deluſions of paſſion, do not recollect that they are exclaiming againſt a ſtrong proof of the immortality of the ſoul.

But leaving ſuperior minds to correct themſelves, and pay dearly for their experience, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that it is not againſt ſtrong, perſevering paſſions; but romantic wavering feelings that I wiſh to guard the female heart by exerciſing the underſtanding: for theſe paradiſaical reveries are oftener the effect of idleneſs than of a lively fancy.

Women have ſeldom ſufficient ſerious employment to ſilence their feelings; a round of little cares, or vain purſuits frittering away all ſtrength of mind and organs, they become naturally only objects of ſenſe.—In ſhort, the whole tenour of female education (the education of ſociety) tends to render the beſt diſpoſed romantic and inconſtant; and the remainder vain and mean. In the preſent ſtate of ſociety this evil can ſcarcely be remedied, I am afraid, in the ſlighteſt degree; ſhould a more laudable ambition ever gain ground they may be brought nearer to nature and reaſon; and become more virtuous and uſeful as they grow more reſpectable.

But, I will venture to aſſert that their reaſon will never acquire ſufficient ſtrength to enable it to regulate their conduct, whilſt the making an appearance in the world is the firſt wiſh of the majority of mankind. To this weak wiſh the natural affections, and the moſt uſeful virtues are ſacrificed. Girls marry merely to *better themſelves*, to borrow a ſignificant vulgar phraſe, and have ſuch perfect power over their hearts as not to permit themſelves to *fall in love* till a man with a ſuperiour fortune offers. On this ſubject I mean to enlarge in a future chapter; it is only neceſſary to drop a hint at preſent, becauſe women are ſo often degraded by ſuffering the ſelfiſh prudence of age to chill the ardour of youth.

From the ſame ſource flows an opinion that young girls ought to dedicate great part of their time to needle-work; yet, this employment contracts their faculties more than any other that could have been choſen for them, by confining their thoughts to their perſons.

Men order their clothes to be made, and have done with the ſubject; women make their own clothes, neceſſary or ornamental, and are continually talking about them; and their thoughts follow their hands. It is not indeed the making of neceſſaries that weakens the mind; but the frippery of dreſs. For when a woman in the lower rank of life makes her huſband's and children's clothes, ſhe does her duty, this is her part of her buſineſs; but when women work only to dreſs better than they could otherwiſe afford, it is worſe than ſheer loſs of time. To render the poor virtuous they muſt be employed, and women in the middle rank of life, did they not ape the faſhions of the nobility, without catching their eaſe, might employ them, whilſt they themſelves managed their families, inſtructed their children, and exerciſed their own minds. Gardening, experimental philoſophy, and literature, would afford them ſubjects to think of and matter for converſation, that in ſome degree would exerciſe their underſtandings. The converſation of French women, who are not ſo rigidly nailed to their chairs to twiſt lappets, and knot ribbons, is frequently ſuperficial; but, I contend, that it is not half ſo inſipid as that of thoſe Engliſh women whoſe time is ſpent in making caps, bonnets, and the whole miſchief of trimmings, not to mention ſhopping, bargain-hunting, &c. &c.: and it is the decent, prudent women, who are moſt degraded by theſe practices; for their motive is ſimply vanity. The wanton who exerciſes her taſte to render her perſon alluring, has ſomething more in view.

Theſe obſervations all branch out of a general one, which I have before made, and which cannot be too often inſiſted upon, for, ſpeaking of men, women, or profeſſions, it will be found that the employment of the thoughts ſhape the character both generally and individually. The thoughts of women ever hover round their perſons, and is it ſurpriſing that their perſons are reckoned moſt valuable? Yet ſome degree of liberty of mind is neceſſary even to form the perſon; and this may be one reaſon why ſome gentle wives have ſo few attractions beſide that of ſex. Add to this, ſedentary employments render the majority of women ſickly—and falſe notions of female excellence make them proud of this delicacy, though it be another fetter, that by calling the attention continually to the body, cramps the activity of the mind.

Women of quality ſeldom do any of the manual part of their dreſs, conſequently only their taſte is exerciſed, and they acquire, by thinking leſs of the finery, when the buſineſs of their toilet is over, that eaſe, which ſeldom appears in the deportment of women, who dreſs merely for the ſake of dreſſing. In fact, the obſervation with reſpect to the middle rank, the one in which talents thrive beſt, extends not to women; for thoſe of the ſuperior claſs, by catching, at leaſt, a ſmattering of literature, and converſing more with men, on general topics, acquire more knowledge than the women who ape their faſhions and faults without ſharing their advantages. With reſpect to virtue, to uſe the word in a comprehenſive ſenſe, I have ſeen moſt in low life. Many poor women maintain their children by the ſweat of their brow, and keep together families that the vices of the fathers would have ſcattered abroad; but gentlewomen are too indolent to be actively virtuous, and are ſoftened rather than refined by civilization. Indeed, the good ſenſe which I have met with, among the poor women who have had few advantages of education, and yet have acted heroically, ſtrongly confirmed me in the opinion that trifling employments have rendered woman a trifler. Men, taking her [*] body, the mind is left to ruſt; ſo that while phyſical love enervates man, as being his favourite recreation, he will endeavour to enſlave woman:—and, who can tell, how many generations may be neceſſary to give vigour to the virtue and talents of the freed poſterity of abject ſlaves [†]?

In tracing the cauſes that, in my opinion, have degraded woman, I have confined my obſervations to ſuch as univerſally act upon the morals and manners of the whole ſex, and to me it appears clear that they all ſpring from want of underſtanding. Whether this ariſe from a phyſical or accidental weakneſs of faculties, time alone can determine; for I ſhall not lay any great ſtreſs on the example of a few women [‡] who, from

having received a maſculine education, have acquired courage and reſolution; I only contend that the men who have been placed in ſimilar ſituations, have acquired a ſimilar character—I ſpeak of bodies of men, and that men of genius and talents have ſtarted out of a claſs, in which women have never yet been placed.

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[*] ‘I take her body,’ ſays Ranger.

[†] ‘Suppoſing that women are voluntary ſlaves—ſlavery of any kind is unfavourable to human happineſs and improvement.’ *Knox's Eſſays.*

[‡] Sappho, Eloiſa, Mrs. Macaulay, the Empreſs of Ruſſia, Madame d'Eon, &c. Theſe, and many more, may be reckoned exceptions; and, are not all heroes, as well as heroines, exceptions to general rules? I wiſh to ſee women neither heroines nor brutes; but reaſonable creatures.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

### ANIMADVERSIONS ON SOME OF THE WRITERS WHO HAVE RENDERED WOMEN OBJECTS OF PITY, BORDERING ON CONTEMPT.

The opinions ſpeciouſly ſupported, in ſome modern publications on the female character and education, which have given the tone to moſt of the obſervations made, in a more curſory manner, on the ſex, remain now to be examined.

### SECT. I.

I shall begin with Rouſſeau, and give a ſketch of the character of women, in his own words, interſperſing comments and reflections. My comments, it is true, will all ſpring from a few ſimple principles, and might have been deduced from what I have already ſaid; but the artificial ſtructure has been raiſed with ſo much ingenuity, that it

ſeems neceſſary to attack it in a more circumſtantial manner, and make the application myſelf.

Sophia, ſays Rouſſeau, ſhould be as perfect a woman as Emilius is a man, and to render her ſo, it is neceſſary to examine the character which nature has given to the ſex.

He then proceeds to prove that woman ought to be weak and paſſive, becauſe ſhe has leſs bodily ſtrength than man; and, from hence infers, that ſhe was formed to pleaſe and to be ſubject to him; and that it is her duty to render herſelf *agreeable* to her maſter—this being the grand end of her exiſtence*. Still, however, to give a little mock dignity to luſt, he inſiſts that man ſhould not exert his ſtrength, but depend on the will of the woman, when he ſeeks for pleaſure with her.

'Hence we deduce a third conſequence
'from the different conſtitutions of the ſexes;
'which is, that the ſtrongeſt ſhould be maſ-
'ter in appearance, and be dependent in fact
'on the weakeſt; and that not from any

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* I have already inſerted the paſſage, page 99.

‘ frivolous practice of gallantry or vanity of
‘ protectorſhip, but from an invariable law
‘ of nature, which, furniſhing woman with
‘ a greater facility to excite deſires than ſhe
‘ has given man to ſatisfy them, makes the
‘ latter dependent on the good pleaſure of the
‘ former, and compels him to endeavour to
‘ pleaſe in his turn, *in order to obtain her*
‘ *conſent that he ſhould be ſtrongeſt* *. On
‘ theſe occaſions, the moſt delightful cir-
‘ cumſtance a man finds in his victory is, to
‘ doubt whether it was the woman's weak-
‘ neſs that yielded to his ſuperior ſtrength,
‘ or whether her inclinations ſpoke in his
‘ favour: the females are alſo generally art-
‘ ful enough to leave this matter in doubt.
‘ The underſtanding of women anſwers in
‘ this reſpect perfectly to their conſtitution:
‘ ſo far from being aſhamed of their weakneſs,
‘ they glory in it; their tender muſcles make
‘ no reſiſtance; they affect to be incapable of
‘ lifting the ſmalleſt burthens, and would
‘ bluſh to be thought robuſt and ſtrong. To
‘ what purpoſe is all this? Not merely for
‘ the ſake of appearing delicate, but through
‘ an artful precaution: it is thus they pro-

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* What nonſenſe!

‘ vide

‘ vide an excuſe beforehand, and a right to
‘ be feeble when they think it expedient *.’

I have quoted this paſſage, leſt my readers ſhould ſuſpect that I warped the author's reaſoning to ſupport my own arguments. I have already aſſerted that in educating women theſe fundamental principles lead to a ſyſtem of cunning and laſciviouſneſs.

Suppoſing woman to have been formed only to pleaſe, and be ſubject to man, the concluſion is juſt, ſhe ought to ſacrifice every other conſideration to render herſelf agreeable to him: and let this brutal deſire of ſelf-preſervation be the grand ſpring of all her actions, when it is proved to be the iron bed of fate, to fit which her character ſhould be ſtretched or contracted, regardleſs of all moral or phyſical diſtinctions. But, if, as I think, may be demonſtrated, the purpoſes, of even this life, viewing the whole, are ſubverted by practical rules built upon this ignoble baſe, I may be allowed to doubt whether woman was created for man: and, though the cry of irreligion, or even atheiſm, be raiſed againſt me, I will ſimply declare, that were an angel from heaven to tell me that Moſes's beautiful, poetical coſmogony, and the account of the fall of man, were literally true, I could not believe what my reaſon told me was derogatory to the character of the Supreme Being: and, having no fear of the devil before mine eyes, I venture to call this a ſuggeſtion of reaſon, inſtead of reſting my weakneſs on the broad ſhoulders of the firſt ſeducer of my frail ſex.

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* Rouſſeau's Emilius, Vol. III. p. 168.

‘ It being once demonſtrated,’ continues Rouſſeau, ‘ that man and woman are not, ‘ nor ought to be, conſtituted alike in temperament and character, it follows of courſe ‘ that they ſhould not be educated in the ſame ‘ manner. In purſuing the directions of nature, they ought indeed to act in concert, ‘ but they ſhould not be engaged in the ſame ‘ employments: the end of their purſuits ‘ ſhould be the ſame, but the means they ‘ ſhould take to accompliſh them, and of ‘ conſequence their taſtes and inclinations, ‘ ſhould be different *.’

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

‘ Whether I conſider the peculiar deſtination of the ſex, obſerve their inclinations, ‘ or remark their duties, all things equally

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* Rouſſeau's Emilius, Vol. III. p. 176.

‘ concur

‘ concur to point out the peculiar method of ‘ education beſt adapted to them. Woman ‘ and man were made for each other; but ‘ their mutual dependence is not the ſame. ‘ The men depend on the women only on ‘ account of their deſires; the women on the ‘ men both on account of their deſires and ‘ their neceſſities: we could ſubſiſt better ‘ without them than they without us *.’

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

‘ For this reaſon, the education of the women ſhould be always relative to the men. ‘ To pleaſe, to be uſeful to us, to make us love ‘ and eſteem them, to educate us when young, ‘ and take care of us when grown up, to adviſe, to conſole us, to render our lives ‘ eaſy and agreeable: theſe are the duties of ‘ women at all times, and what they ſhould ‘ be taught in their infancy. So long as we ‘ fail to recur to this principle, we run wide ‘ of the mark, and all the precepts which ‘ are given them contribute neither to their ‘ happineſs nor our own †.’

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

‘ Girls are from their earlieſt infancy fond ‘ of dreſs. Not content with being pretty, they are deſirous of being thought ſo; we ſee, by all their little airs, that this thought engages their attention; and they are hardly capable of underſtanding what is ſaid to them, before they are to be governed by talking to them of what people will think of their behaviour. The ſame motive, however, indiſcreetly made uſe of with boys, has not the ſame effect: provided they are let to purſue their amuſements at pleaſure, they care very little what people think of them. Time and pains are neceſſary to ſubject boys to this motive.

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* Rouſſeau's Emilius, Vol. III. p. 179. † P. 181.

'Whenceſoever girls derive this firſt leſſon, it is a very good one. As the body is born, in a manner before the ſoul, our firſt concern ſhould be to cultivate the former; this order is common to both ſexes, but the object of that cultivation is different. In the one ſex it is the developement of corporeal powers; in the other, that of perſonal charms: not that either the quality of ſtrength or beauty ought to be confined excluſively to one ſex; but only that the order of the cultivation of both is in that reſpect reverſed. Women certainly require as much ſtrength as to enable them to move and act gracefully, and men as much addreſs as to qualify them to act with eaſe.'

. . . . . . . . . . . . .

'Children of both ſexes have a great many amuſements in common; and ſo they ought; have they not alſo many ſuch when they are grown up? Each ſex has alſo its peculiar taſte to diſtinguiſh in this particular. Boys love ſports of noiſe and activity; to beat the drum, to whip the top, and to drag about their little carts: girls, on the other hand, are fonder of things of ſhow and ornament; ſuch as mirrours, trinkets, and dolls: the doll is the peculiar amuſement of the females; from whence we ſee their taſte plainly adapted to their deſtination. The phyſical part of the art of pleaſing lies in dreſs; and this is all which children are capacitated to cultivate of that art.'

. . . . . . . . . . . . .

'Here then we ſee a primary propenſity firmly eſtabliſhed, which you need only to purſue and regulate. The little creature will doubtleſs be very deſirous to know how to dreſs up her doll, to make its ſleeve-knots, its flounces, its head-dreſs, &c. ſhe is obliged to have ſo much recourſe to the people about her, for their aſſiſtance in theſe articles, that it would be much more agreeable to her to owe them all to her own induſtry. Hence we have a good reaſon for the firſt leſſons that are uſually taught theſe young females: in which we do not appear to be ſetting them a taſk, but obliging them, by inſtructing them in what is immediately uſeful to themſelves. And, in fact, almoſt all of them learn with reluctance to read and write; but very readily apply themſelves to the uſe of their needles. They imagine themſelves already grown up, and think with pleaſure that ſuch qualifications will enable them to decorate themſelves.’

This is certainly only an education of the body; but Rouſſeau is not the only man who has indirectly ſaid that merely the perſon of a *young* woman, without any mind, unleſs animal ſpirits come under that deſcription, is very pleaſing. To render it weak, and what ſome may call beautiful, the underſtanding is neglected, and girls forced to ſit ſtill, play with dolls and liſten to fooliſh converſations;—the effect of habit is inſiſted upon as an undoubted indication of nature. I know it was Rouſſeau's opinion that the firſt years of youth ſhould be employed to form the body, though in educating Emilius he deviates from this plan; yet, the difference between ſtrengthening the body, on which ſtrength of mind in a great meaſure depends, and only giving it an eaſy motion, is very wide.

Rouſſeau's obſervations, it is proper to remark, were made in a country where the art of pleaſing was refined only to extract the groſſneſs of vice. He did not go back to nature, or his ruling appetite diſturbed the operations of reaſon, elſe he would not have drawn theſe crude inferences.

In France boys and girls, particularly the latter, are only educated to pleaſe, to manage their perſons, and regulate their exterior behaviour; and their minds are corrupted, at a very early age, by the worldly and pious cautions they receive to guard them againſt immodeſty. I ſpeak of paſt times. The very confeſſions which mere children were obliged to make, and the queſtions aſked by the holy men, I aſſert theſe facts on good authority, were ſufficient to impreſs a ſexual character; and the education of ſociety was a ſchool of coquetry and art. At the age of ten or eleven; nay, often much ſooner, girls began to coquet, and talked, unreproved, of eſtabliſhing themſelves in the world by marriage.

In ſhort, they were made women, almoſt from their very birth, and compliments were liſtened to inſtead of inſtruction. Theſe, weakening the mind, Nature was ſuppoſed to have acted like a ſtep-mother, when ſhe formed this after-thought of creation.

Not allowing them underſtanding, however, it was but conſiſtent to ſubject them to authority independent of reaſon; and to prepare them for this ſubjection, he gives the following advice:

'Girls ought to be active and diligent; nor is that all; they ſhould alſo be early ſubjected to reſtraint. This misfortune, if it really be one, is inſeparable from their ſex; nor do they ever throw it off but to ſuffer more cruel evils. They muſt be ſubject, all their lives, to the moſt conſtant and ſevere reſtraint, which is that of decorum: it is, therefore, neceſſary to accuſtom them early to ſuch confinement, that it may not afterwards coſt them too dear; and to the ſuppreſſion of their caprices, that they may the more readily ſubmit to the will of others. If, indeed, they are fond of being always at work, they ſhould be ſometimes compelled to lay it aſide. Diſſipation, levity, and inconſtancy, are faults that readily ſpring up from their firſt propenſities, when corrupted or perverted by too much indulgence. To prevent this abuſe, we ſhould learn them, above all things, to lay a due reſtraint on themſelves. The life of a modeſt woman is reduced, by our abſurd inſtitutions, to a perpetual conflict with herſelf: not but it is juſt that this ſex ſhould partake of the ſufferings which ariſe from thoſe evils it hath cauſed us.'

And why is the life of a modeſt woman a perpetual conflict? I ſhould anſwer, that this very ſyſtem of education makes it ſo. Modeſty, temperance, and ſelf-denial, are the ſober offspring of reaſon; but when ſenſibility is nurtured at the expence of the underſtanding, ſuch weak beings muſt be reſtrained by arbitrary means, and be ſubjected to continual conflicts; but give their activity of mind a wider range, and nobler paſſions and motives will govern their appetites and ſentiments.

'The common attachment and regard of a mother, nay, mere habit, will make her beloved by her children, if ſhe does nothing to incur their hate. Even the conſtraint ſhe lays them under, if well directed, will increaſe their affection, inſtead of leſſening it; becauſe a ſtate of dependence being natural to the ſex, they perceive themſelves formed for obedience.

This is begging the queſtion; for ſervitude not only debaſes the individual, but its effects ſeem to be tranſmitted to poſterity. Conſidering the length of time that women have been dependent, is it ſurpriſing that ſome of them hug their chains, and fawn like the ſpaniel? 'Theſe dogs,' obſerves a naturaliſt, 'at firſt kept their ears erect; but cuſtom has ſuperſeded nature, and a token of fear is become a beauty.'

'For the ſame reaſon,' adds Rouſſeau, 'women have, or ought to have, but little liberty; they are apt to indulge themſelves exceſſively in what is allowed them. Addicted in every thing to extremes, they are

even more tranſported at their diverſions than boys.'

The anſwer to this is very ſimple. Slaves and mobs have always indulged themſelves in the ſame exceſſes, when once they broke looſe from authority.—The bent bow recoils with violence, when the hand is ſuddenly relaxed that forcibly held it; and ſenſibility, the play-thing of outward circumſtances, muſt be ſubjected to authority, or moderated by reaſon.

'There reſults,' he continues, 'from this habitual reſtraint a tractableneſs which the women have occaſion for during their whole lives, as they conſtantly remain either under ſubjection to the men, or to the opinions of mankind; and are never permitted to ſet themſelves above thoſe opinions. The firſt and moſt important qualification in a woman is good-nature or ſweetneſs of temper: formed to obey a being ſo imperfect as man, often full of vices, and always full of faults, ſhe ought to learn betimes even to ſuffer injuſtice, and to bear the inſults of a huſband without complaint; it is not for his ſake, but her own, that ſhe ſhould be of a mild diſpoſition. The perverſeneſs

‘ and ill-nature of the women only ſerve to aggravate their own misfortunes, and the miſconduct of their huſbands; they might plainly perceive that ſuch are not the arms by which they gain the ſuperiority.’

Formed to live with ſuch an imperfect being as man, they ought to learn from the exerciſe of their faculties the neceſſity of forbearance; but all the ſacred rights of humanity are violated by inſiſting on blind obedience; or, the moſt ſacred rights belong *only* to man.

The being who patiently endures injuſtice, and ſilently bears inſults, will ſoon become unjuſt, or unable to diſcern right from wrong. Beſides, I deny the fact, this is not the true way to form or meliorate the temper; for, as a ſex, men have better tempers than women, becauſe they are occupied by purſuits that intereſt the head as well as the heart; and the ſteadineſs of the head gives a healthy temperature to the heart. People of ſenſibility have ſeldom good tempers. The formation of the temper is the cool work of reaſon, when, as life advances, ſhe mixes with happy art, jarring elements. I never knew a weak or ignorant perſon who

had a good temper, though that conſtitutional good humour, and that docility, which fear ſtamps on the behaviour, often obtains the name. I ſay behaviour, for genuine meekneſs never reached the heart or mind, unleſs as the effect of reflection; and that ſimple reſtraint produces a number of peccant humours in domeſtic life, many ſenſible men will allow, who find ſome of theſe gentle irritable creatures, very troubleſome companions.

‘ Each ſex,’ he further argues, ‘ ſhould preſerve its peculiar tone and manner; a meek huſband may make a wife impertinent; but mildneſs of diſpoſition on the woman’s ſide will always bring a man back to reaſon, at leaſt if he be not abſolutely a brute, and will ſooner or later triumph over him.’ True, the mildneſs of reaſon; but abject fear always inſpires contempt; and tears are only eloquent when they flow down fair cheeks.

Of what materials can that heart be compoſed, which can melt when inſulted, and inſtead of revolting at injuſtice, kiſs the rod? Is it unfair to infer that her virtue is built on narrow views and ſelfiſhneſs, who can careſs a man, with true feminine ſoftneſs, the very moment when he treats her tyrannically? Nature never dictated ſuch inſincerity;—and, though prudence of this ſort be termed a virtue, morality becomes vague when any part is ſuppoſed to reſt on falſehood. Theſe are mere expedients, and expedients are only uſeful for the moment.

Let the huſband beware of truſting too implicitly to this ſervile obedience; for if his wife can with winning ſweetneſs careſs him when angry, and when ſhe ought to be angry, unleſs contempt had ſtifled a natural effervеſcence, ſhe may do the ſame after parting with a lover. Theſe are all preparations for adultery; or, ſhould the fear of the world, or of hell, reſtrain her deſire of pleaſing other men, when ſhe can no longer pleaſe her huſband, what ſubſtitute can be found by a being who was only formed, by nature and art, to pleaſe man? what can make her amends for this privation, or where is ſhe to ſeek for a freſh employment? where find ſufficient ſtrength of mind to determine to begin the ſearch, when her habits are fixed, and vanity has long ruled her chaotic mind?

But this partial moraliſt recommends cunning ſyſtematically and plauſibly.

‘ Daughters

‘ Daughters ſhould be always ſubmiſſive; their mothers, however, ſhould not be inexorable. To make a young perſon tractable, ſhe ought not to be made unhappy; to make her modeſt ſhe ought not to be rendered ſtupid. On the contrary, I ſhould not be diſpleaſed at her being permitted to uſe ſome art, not to elude puniſhment in caſe of diſobedience, but to exempt herſelf from the neceſſity of obeying. It is not neceſſary to make her dependence burdenſome, but only to let her feel it. Subtilty is a talent natural to the ſex; and, as I am perſuaded, all our natural inclinations are right and good in themſelves, I am of opinion this ſhould be cultivated as well as the others: it is requiſite for us only to prevent its abuſe.’

‘ Whatever is, is right,’ he then proceeds triumphantly to infer. Granted;—yet, perhaps, no aphoriſm ever contained a more paradoxical aſſertion. It is a ſolemn truth with reſpect to God. He, reverentially I ſpeak, ſees the whole at once, and ſaw its juſt proportions in the womb of time; but man, who can only inſpect disjointed parts, finds many things wrong; and it is a part of the ſyſtem, and therefore right, that he ſhould endeavour to alter what appears to him to be ſo, even while he bows to the Wiſdom of his Creator, and reſpects the darkneſs he labours to diſperſe.

The inference that follows is juſt ſuppoſing the principle to be ſound. 'The ſuperiority of addreſs, peculiar to the female ſex, is a very equitable indemnification for their inferiority in point of ſtrength: without this, woman would not be the companion of man; but his ſlave: it is by her ſuperiour art and ingenuity that ſhe preſerves her equality, and governs him while ſhe affects to obey. Woman has every thing againſt her, as well our faults, as her own timidity and weakneſs; ſhe has nothing in her favour, but her ſubtilty and her beauty. Is it not very reaſonable, therefore, ſhe ſhould cultivate both?' Greatneſs of mind can never dwell with cunning, or addreſs, for I ſhall not boggle about words, when their direct ſignification is inſincerity and falſehood; but content myſelf with obſerving, that if any claſs of mankind are to be educated by rules not ſtrictly deducible from truth, virtue is an affair of convention. How could Rouſſeau dare to

aſſert,

aſſert, after giving this advice, that in the grand end of exiſtence the object of both ſexes ſhould be the ſame, when he well knew that the mind, formed by its purſuits, is expanded by great views ſwallowing up little ones, or that it becomes itſelf little?

Men have ſuperiour ſtrength of body; but were it not for miſtaken notions of beauty, women would acquire ſufficient to enable them to earn their own ſubſiſtence, the true definition of independence; and to bear thoſe bodily inconveniencies and exertions that are requiſite to ſtrengthen the mind.

Let us then, by being allowed to take the ſame exerciſe as boys, not only during infancy, but youth, arrive at perfection of body, that we may know how far the natural ſuperiority of man extends. For what reaſon or virtue can be expected from a creature when the ſeed-time of life is neglected? None—did not the winds of heaven caſually ſcatter many uſeful ſeeds in the fallow ground.

'Beauty cannot be acquired by dreſs, and coquetry is an art not ſo early and ſpeedily attained. While girls are yet young, however, they are in a capacity to ſtudy agree-

‘-able geſture, a pleaſing modulation of voice, an eaſy carriage and behaviour; as well as to take the advantage of gracefully adapting their looks and attitudes to time, place, and occaſion. Their application, therefore, ſhould not be ſolely confined to the arts of induſtry and the needle, when they come to diſplay other talents, whoſe utility is already apparent.’

‘For my part, I would have a young Engliſhwoman cultivate her agreeable talents, in order to pleaſe her future huſband, with as much care and aſſiduity as a young Circaſſian cultivates her’s, to fit her for the Harem of an Eaſtern baſhaw.’

To render women completely inſignificant, he adds—‘The tongues of women are very voluble; they ſpeak earlier, more readily, and more agreeably, than the men; they are accuſed alſo of ſpeaking much more: but ſo it ought to be, and I ſhould be very ready to convert this reproach into a compliment; their lips and eyes have the ſame activity, and for the ſame reaſon. A man ſpeaks of what he knows, a woman of what pleaſes her; the one requires knowledge, the other taſte; the principal object of a man’s diſcourſe ſhould be what is uſeful, that of a woman’s what is agreeable. There ought to be nothing in common between their different converſation but truth.’

‘We ought not, therefore, to reſtrain the prattle of girls, in the ſame manner as we ſhould that of boys, with that ſevere queſtion; *To what purpoſe are you talking?* but by another, which is no leſs difficult to anſwer, *How will your diſcourſe be received?* In infancy, while they are as yet incapable to diſcern good from evil, they ought to obſerve it, as a law, never to ſay any thing diſagreeable to thoſe whom they are ſpeaking to: what will render the practice of this rule alſo the more difficult, is, that it muſt ever be ſubordinate to the former, of never ſpeaking falſely or telling an untruth.’ To govern the tongue in this manner muſt require great addreſs indeed; and it is too much practiſed both by men and women.—Out of the abundance of the heart how few ſpeak! So few, that I, who love ſimplicity, would gladly give up politeneſs for a quarter of the virtue that has been ſacrificed to an equivocal quality which at beſt ſhould only be the poliſh of virtue.

But, to complete the ſketch. ‘It is eaſy to be conceived, that if male children are not in a capacity to form any true notions of religion, thoſe ideas muſt be greatly above the conception of the females: it is for this very reaſon, I would begin to ſpeak to them the earlier on this ſubject; for if we were to wait till they were in a capacity to diſcuſs methodically ſuch profound queſtions, we ſhould run a riſk of never ſpeaking to them on this ſubject as long as they lived. Reaſon in women is a practical reaſon, capacitating them artfully to diſcover the means of attaining a known end, but which would never enable them to diſcover that end itſelf. The ſocial relations of the ſexes are indeed truly admirable: from their union there reſults a moral perſon, of which woman may be termed the eyes, and man the hand, with this dependence on each other, that it is from the man that the woman is to learn what ſhe is to ſee, and it is of the woman that man is to learn what he ought to do. If woman could recur to the firſt principles of things as well as man, and man was capacitated to enter into their *minutiæ* as

well as woman, always independent of each other, they would live in perpetual diſcord, and their union could not ſubſiſt. But in the preſent harmony which naturally ſubſiſts between them, their different faculties tend to one common end; it is difficult to ſay which of them conduces the moſt to it: each follows the impulſe of the other; each is obedient, and both are maſters.’

‘As the conduct of a woman is ſubſervient to the public opinion, her faith in matters of religion ſhould, for that very reaſon, be ſubject to authority. *Every daughter ought to be of the ſame religion as her mother, and every wife to be of the ſame religion as her huſband: for, though ſuch religion ſhould be falſe, that docility which induces the mother and daughter to ſubmit to the order of nature, take away, in the ſight of God, the criminality of their error*[*].’ As they are not in a capacity to judge for themſelves, they ought to abide by the deciſion of their fathers and huſbands as confidently as by that of the church.’

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[*] What is to be the conſequence, if the mother's and huſband's opinion ſhould *chance* not to agree? An ignorant perſon cannot be reaſoned out of an error—and when *perſuaded* to give up one prejudice for another the mind is unſettled. Indeed, the huſband may not have any religion to teach her, though in ſuch a ſituation ſhe will be in great want of a ſupport to her virtue, independent of worldly conſiderations.

‘As authority ought to regulate the religion of the women, it is not ſo needful to explain to them the reaſons for their belief, as to lay down preciſely the tenets they are to believe: for the creed, which preſents only obſcure ideas to the mind, is the ſource of fanaticiſm; and that which preſents abſurdities, leads to infidelity.’

Abſolute, uncontroverted authority, it ſeems, muſt ſubſiſt ſomewhere: but is not this a direct and excluſive appropriation of reaſon? The *rights* of humanity have been thus confined to the male line from Adam downwards. Rouſſeau would carry his male ariſtocracy ſtill further, for he inſinuates, that he ſhould not blame thoſe, who contend for leaving woman in a ſtate of the moſt profound ignorance, if it were not neceſſary in order to preſerve her chaſtity and juſtify the man's choice, in the eyes of the world, to give her a little knowledge of men, and the cuſtoms produced by human paſſions; elſe ſhe might propagate at home without being rendered leſs voluptuous and innocent by the exerciſe of her underſtanding: excepting, indeed, during the firſt year of marriage, when ſhe might employ it to dreſs like Sophia. ‘Her dreſs is extremely modeſt in appearance, and yet very coquettiſh in fact: ſhe does not make a diſplay of her charms, ſhe conceals them; but in concealing them, ſhe knows how to affect your imagination. Every one who ſees her, will ſay, There is a modeſt and diſcreet girl; but while you are near her, your eyes and affections wander all over her perſon, ſo that you cannot withdraw them; and you would conclude, that every part of her dreſs, ſimple as it ſeems, was only put in its proper order to be taken to pieces by the imagination.’ Is this modeſty? Is this a preparation for immortality? Again.—What opinion are we to form of a ſyſtem of education, when the author ſays of his heroine, ‘that with her, doing things well, is but a *ſecondary* concern; her principal concern is to do them *neatly*.’

Secondary, in fact, are all her virtues and qualities, for, reſpecting religion, he makes her parents thus addreſs her, accuſtomed to ſubmiſſion—‘Your huſband will inſtruct you in good time.’

After thus cramping a woman's mind, if, in order to keep it fair, he has not made it quite a blank, he adviſes her to reflect, that a reflecting man may not yawn in her company, when he is tired of careſſing her.—What has ſhe to reflect about who muſt obey? and would it not be a refinement on cruelty only to open her mind to make the darkneſs and miſery of her fate *viſible*? Yet, theſe are his ſenſible remarks; how conſiſtent with what I have already been obliged to quote, to give a fair view of the ſubject, the reader may determine.

'They who paſs their whole lives in working for their daily bread, have no ideas beyond their buſineſs or their intereſt, and all their underſtanding ſeems to lie in their fingers' ends. This ignorance is neither prejudicial to their integrity nor their morals; it is often of ſervice to them. Sometimes, by means of reflexion, we are led to compound with our duty, and we conclude by ſubſtituting a jargon of words, in the room of things. Our own conſcience is the moſt enlightened philoſopher. There is no need to be acquainted with Tully's offices, to make a man of probity: and perhaps the moſt virtuous woman in the world, is the leaſt acquainted with the definition of virtue. But it is no leſs true, that an improved underſtanding can only render ſociety agreeable; and it is a melancholy thing for a father of a family, who is fond of home, to be obliged to be always wrapped up in himſelf, and to have nobody about him to whom he can impart his ſentiments.

'Beſides, how ſhould a woman void of reflection be capable of educating her children? How ſhould ſhe diſcern what is proper for them? How ſhould ſhe incline them to thoſe virtues ſhe is unacquainted with, or to that merit of which ſhe has no idea? She can only ſooth or chide them; render them inſolent or timid; ſhe will make them formal coxcombs, or ignorant blockheads; but will never make them ſenſible or amiable.' How indeed ſhould ſhe, when her huſband is not always at hand to lend her his reaſon?—when they both together make but one moral being. A blind will, 'eyes without hands,' would go a very little way; and perchance his abſtract reaſon, that ſhould concentrate the ſcattered beams of her practical reaſon, may be employed in judging of the flavour

flavour of wine, deſcanting on the ſauces moſt proper for turtle; or, more profoundly intent at a card-table, he may be generalizing his ideas as he bets away his fortune, leaving all the *minutiæ* of education to his helpmate or to chance.

But, granting that woman ought to be beautiful, innocent, and ſilly, to render her a more alluring and indulgent companion;—what is her underſtanding ſacrificed for? And why is all this preparation neceſſary only, according to Rouſſeau's own account, to make her the miſtreſs of her huſband, a very ſhort time? For no man ever inſiſted more on the tranſient nature of love. Thus ſpeaks the philoſopher. 'Senſual pleaſures are tranſient. The habitual ſtate of the affections always loſe by their gratification. The imagination, which decks the object of our deſires, is loſt in fruition. Excepting the Supreme Being, who is ſelf-exiſtent, there is nothing beautiful but what is ideal.'

But he returns to his unintelligible paradoxes again, when he thus addreſſes Sophia. 'Emilius, in becoming your huſband, is become your maſter; and claims your obedience. Such is the order of nature. When a man is married, however, to ſuch a wife as Sophia, it is proper he ſhould be directed by her: this is alſo agreeable to the order of nature: it is, therefore, to give you as much authority over his heart as his ſex gives him over your perſon, that I have made you the arbiter of his pleaſures. It may coſt you, perhaps, ſome diſagreeable ſelf-denial; but you will be certain of maintaining your empire over him, if you can preſerve it over yourſelf—what I have already obſerved, alſo, ſhows me, that this difficult attempt does not ſurpaſs your courage.

'Would you have your huſband conſtantly at your feet? keep him at ſome diſtance from your perſon. You will long maintain the authority in love, if you know but how to render your favours rare and valuable. It is thus you may employ even the arts of coquetry in the ſervice of virtue, and thoſe of love in that of reaſon.'

I ſhall cloſe my extracts with a juſt deſcription of a comfortable couple. 'And yet you muſt not imagine, that even ſuch management will always ſuffice. Whatever precaution be taken, enjoyment will, by degrees, take off the edge of paſſion. But 'when love hath laſted as long as poſſible, a pleaſing habitude ſupplies its place, and the attachment of a mutual confidence ſucceeds to the tranſports of paſſion. Children often form a more agreeable and permanent connection between married people than even love itſelf. When you ceaſe to be the miſtreſs of Emilius, you will continue to be his wife and friend, you will be the mother of his children*.'

Children, he truly obſerves, form a much more permanent connexion between married people than love. Beauty, he declares, will not be valued, or even ſeen after a couple have lived ſix months together; artificial graces and coquetry will likewiſe pall on the ſenſes: why then does he ſay that a girl ſhould be educated for her huſband with the ſame care as for an eaſtern harem?

I now appeal from the reveries of fancy and refined licentiouſneſs to the good ſenſe of mankind, whether, if the object of education be to prepare women to become chaſte wives and ſenſible mothers, the method ſo plauſibly recommended in the foregoing ſketch, be the one beſt calculated to produce thoſe ends? Will it be allowed that the ſureſt way

to make a wife chaſte, is to teach her to practiſe the wanton arts of a miſtreſs, termed virtuous coquetry, by the ſenſualiſt who can no longer reliſh the artleſs charms of ſincerity, or taſte the pleaſure ariſing from a tender intimacy, when confidence is unchecked by ſuſpicion, and rendered intereſting by ſenſe?

The man who can be contented to live with a pretty, uſeful companion, without a mind, has loſt in voluptuous gratifications a taſte for more refined enjoyments; he has never felt the calm ſatisfaction, that refreſhes the parched heart, like the ſilent dew of heaven,—of being beloved by one who could underſtand him.—In the ſociety of his wife he is ſtill alone, unleſs when the man is ſunk in the brute. 'The charm of life,' ſays a grave philoſophical reaſoner, is 'ſympathy; nothing pleaſes us more than to obſerve in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breaſt.'

But, according to the tenour of reaſoning, by which women are kept from the tree of knowledge, the important years of youth, the uſefulneſs of age, and the rational hopes of futurity, are all to be ſacrificed to render women an object of deſire for a *ſhort* time. Beſides, how could Rouſſeau expect them to

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* Rouſſeau's Emilius.

be virtuous and conſtant when reaſon is neither allowed to be the foundation of their virtue, nor truth the object of their inquiries?

But all Rouſſeau's errors in reaſoning aroſe from ſenſibility, and ſenſibility to their charms women are very ready to forgive! When he ſhould have reaſoned he became impaſſioned, and reflection inflamed his imagination inſtead of enlightening his underſtanding. Even his virtues alſo led him farther aſtray; for, born with a warm conſtitution and lively fancy, nature carried him toward the other ſex with ſuch eager fondneſs, that he ſoon became laſcivious. Had he given way to theſe deſires, the fire would have extinguiſhed itſelf in a natural manner; but virtue, and a romantic kind of delicacy, made him practiſe ſelf-denial; yet, when fear, delicacy, or virtue, reſtrained him, he debauched his imagination, and reflecting on the ſenſations to which fancy gave force, he traced them in the moſt glowing colours, and ſunk them deep into his ſoul.

He then ſought for ſolitude, not to ſleep with the man of nature; or calmly inveſtigate the cauſes of things under the ſhade where Sir Iſaac Newton indulged contemplation, but merely to indulge his feelings. And ſo warmly has he painted, what he forcibly felt, that, intereſting the heart and inflaming the imagination of his readers; in proportion to the ſtrength of their fancy, they imagine that their underſtanding is convinced when they only ſympathize with a poetic writer, who ſkilfully exhibits the objects of ſenſe, moſt voluptuouſly ſhadowed or gracefully veiled—And thus making us feel whilſt dreaming that we reaſon, erroneous concluſions are left in the mind.

Why was Rouſſeau's life divided between ecſtaſy and miſery? Can any other anſwer be given than this, that the efferveſcence of his imagination produced both; but, had his fancy been allowed to cool, it is poſſible that he might have acquired more ſtrength of mind. Still, if the purpoſe of life be to educate the intellectual part of man, all with reſpect to him was right; yet, had not death led to a nobler ſcene of action, it is probable that he would have enjoyed more equal happineſs on earth, and have felt the calm ſenſations of the man of nature inſtead of being prepared for another ſtage of exiſtence by nouriſhing the paſſions which agitate the civilized man.

But peace to his manes! I war not with

his aſhes, but his opinions. I war only with the ſenſibility that led him to degrade woman by making her the ſlave of love.

> ———‘ Curs'd vaſſalage,
> ‘ Firſt idoliz'd till love's hot fire be o'er,
> ‘ Then ſlaves to thoſe who courted us before.’
>
> *Dryden.*

The pernicious tendency of thoſe books, in which the writers inſidiouſly degrade the ſex whilſt they are proſtrate before their perſonal charms, cannot be too often or too ſeverely expoſed.

Let us, my dear contemporaries, ariſe above ſuch narrow prejudices! If wiſdom is deſirable on its own account, if virtue, to deſerve the name, muſt be founded on knowledge; let us endeavour to ſtrengthen our minds by reflexion, till our heads become a balance for our hearts; let us not confine all our thoughts to the petty occurrences of the day, nor our knowledge to an acquaintance with our lovers' or huſbands' hearts; but let the practice of every duty be ſubordinate to the grand one of improving our minds, and preparing our affections for a more exalted ſtate!

Beware then, my friends, of ſuffering the heart to be moved by every trivial incident:

the

the reed is ſhaken by a breeze, and annually dies, but the oak ſtands firm, and for ages braves the ſtorm!

Were we, indeed, only created to flutter our hour out and die—why let us then indulge ſenſibility, and laugh at the ſeverity of reaſon.—Yet, alas! even then we ſhould want ſtrength of body and mind, and life would be loſt in feveriſh pleaſures or weariſome languor.

But the ſyſtem of education, which I earneſtly wiſh to ſee exploded, ſeems to preſuppoſe what ought never to be taken for granted, that virtue ſhields us from the caſualties of life; and that fortune, ſlipping off her bandage, will ſmile on a well-educated female, and bring in her hand an Emilius or a Telemachus. Whilſt, on the contrary, the reward which virtue promiſes to her votaries is confined, it is clear, to their own boſoms; and often muſt they contend with the moſt vexatious worldly cares, and bear with the vices and humours of relations for whom they can never feel a friendſhip.

There have been many women in the world who, inſtead of being ſupported by the reaſon and virtue of their fathers and brothers, have ſtrengthened their own minds by ſtruggling with their vices and follies; yet have never met with a hero, in the ſhape of a huſband; who, paying the debt that mankind owed them, might chance to bring back their reaſon to its natural dependent ſtate, and reſtore the uſurped prerogative, of riſing above opinion, to man.

### SECT. II.

DR. FORDYCE's ſermons have long made a part of a young woman's library; nay, girls at ſchool are allowed to read them; but I ſhould inſtantly diſmiſs them from my pupil's, if I wiſhed to ſtrengthen her underſtanding, by leading her to form ſound principles on a broad baſis; or, were I only anxious to cultivate her taſte; though they muſt be allowed to contain many ſenſible obſervations.

Dr. Fordyce may have had a very laudable end in view; but theſe diſcourſes are written in ſuch an affected ſtyle, that were it only on that account, and had I nothing to object againſt his *mellifluous* precepts, I ſhould not allow girls to peruſe them, unleſs I deſigned to

to hunt every ſpark of nature out of their compoſition, melting every human quality into female meekneſs and artificial grace. I ſay artificial, for true grace ariſes from ſome kind of independence of mind.

Children, careleſs of pleaſing, and only anxious to amuſe themſelves, are often very graceful; and the nobility who have moſtly lived with inferiours, and always had the command of money, acquire a graceful eaſe of deportment, which ſhould rather be termed habitual grace of body, than that ſuperiour gracefulneſs which is truly the expreſſion of the mind. This mental grace, not noticed by vulgar eyes, often flaſhes acroſs a rough countenance, and irradiating every feature, ſhows ſimplicity and independence of mind. —It is then we read characters of immortality in the eye, and ſee the ſoul in every geſture, though when at reſt, neither the face nor limbs may have much beauty to recommend them; or the behaviour, any thing peculiar to attract univerſal attention. The maſs of mankind, however, look for more *tangible* beauty; yet ſimplicity is, in general, admired, when people do not conſider what they admire; and can there be ſimplicity without ſincerity? But, to have done with remarks that are in ſome meaſure deſultory, though naturally excited by the ſubject—

In declamatory periods Dr. Fordyce ſpins out Rouſſeau's eloquence; and in moſt ſentimental rant, details his opinions reſpecting the female character, and the behaviour which woman ought to aſſume to render her lovely.

He ſhall ſpeak for himſelf, for thus he makes Nature addreſs man. 'Behold theſe ſmiling innocents, whom I have graced with my faireſt gifts, and committed to your protection; behold them with love and reſpect; treat them with tenderneſs and honour. They are timid and want to be defended. They are frail; O do not take advantage of their weakneſs! Let their fears and bluſhes endear them. Let their confidence in you never be abuſed.—But is it poſſible, that any of you can be ſuch barbarians, ſo ſupremely wicked, as to abuſe it? Can you find in your hearts* to deſpoil the gentle, truſting creatures of their treaſure, or do any thing to ſtrip them of their native robe of virtue? Curſt be the impious hand that would dare to violate the unblemiſhed form of Chaſtity! Thou wretch! thou ruffian! forbear; nor venture to provoke heaven's fierceſt vengeance.' I know not any comment that can be made ſeriouſly on this curious paſſage, and I could produce many ſimilar ones; and ſome, ſo very ſentimental, that I have heard rational men uſe the word indecent, when they mentioned them with diſguſt.

Throughout there is a diſplay of cold artificial feelings, and that parade of ſenſibility which boys and girls ſhould be taught to deſpiſe as the ſure mark of a little vain mind. Florid appeals are made to heaven, and to the *beauteous innocents*, the faireſt image of heaven here below, whilſt ſober ſenſe is left far behind.—This is not the language of the heart, nor will it ever reach it, though the ear may be tickled.

I ſhall be told, perhaps, that the public have been pleaſed with theſe volumes.—True—and Hervey's Meditations are ſtill read, though he equally ſinned againſt ſenſe and taſte.

I particularly object to the lover-like phraſes of pumped up paſſion, which are every where interſperſed. If women be ever allowed to walk without leading-ſtrings, why muſt they be cajoled into virtue by artful flattery and ſexual compliments?—Speak to them the language of truth and ſoberneſs, and away with the lullaby ſtrains of condeſcending endearment! Let them be taught to reſpect themſelves as rational creatures, and not led to have a paſſion for their own inſipid perſons. It moves my gall to hear a preacher deſcanting on dreſs and needle-work; and ſtill more, to hear him addreſs the *Britiſh fair*, *the faireſt of the fair*, as if they had only feelings.

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* Can you?—Can you? would be the moſt emphatical comment, were it drawled out in a whining voice.

Even recommending piety he uſes the following argument. 'Never, perhaps, does a fine woman ſtrike more deeply, than when, compoſed into pious recollection, and poſſeſſed with the nobleſt conſiderations, ſhe aſſumes, without knowing it, ſuperiour dignity and new graces; ſo that the beauties of holineſs ſeem to radiate about her, and the by-ſtanders are almoſt induced to fancy her already worſhipping amongſt her kindred angels!' Why are women to be thus bred up with a deſire of conqueſt? the very epithet, uſed in this ſenſe, gives me a ſickly qualm! Does religion and virtue offer no ſtronger motives, no brighter reward? Muſt they always be debaſed by being made

to conſider the ſex of their companions? Muſt they be taught always to be pleaſing? And when levelling their ſmall artillery at the heart of man, is it neceſſary to tell them that a little ſenſe is ſufficient to render their attention *incredibly ſoothing*? 'As a ſmall degree of knowledge entertains in a woman, ſo from a woman, though for a different reaſon, a ſmall expreſſion of kindneſs delights, particularly if ſhe have beauty!' I ſhould have ſuppoſed for the ſame reaſon.

Why are girls to be told that they reſemble angels; but to ſink them below women? Or, that a gentle innocent female is an object that comes nearer to the idea which we have formed of angels than any other. Yet they are told, at the ſame time, that they are only like angels when they are young and beautiful; conſequently, it is their perſons, not their virtues, that procures them this homage.

Idle empty words! What can ſuch deluſive flattery lead to, but vanity and folly? The lover, it is true, has a poetic licence to exalt his miſtreſs; his reaſon is the bubble of his paſſion, and he does not utter a falſehood, when he borrows the language of adoration. His imagination may raiſe the idol of his heart, unblamed, above humanity; and happy would it be for women, if they were only flattered by the men who loved them; I mean, who love the individual, not the ſex; but ſhould a grave preacher interlard his diſcourſes with ſuch fooleries?

In ſermons or novels, however, voluptuouſneſs is always true to its text. Men are allowed by moraliſts to cultivate, as Nature directs, different qualities, and aſſume the different characters, that the ſame paſſions, modified almoſt to infinity, give to each individual. A virtuous man may have a choleric or a ſanguine conſtitution, be gay or grave, unreproved; be firm till he is almoſt overbearing, or, weakly ſubmiſſive, have no will or opinion of his own; but all women are to be levelled, by meekneſs and docility, into one character of yielding ſoftneſs and gentle compliance.

I will uſe the preacher's own words. 'Let it be obſerved, that in your ſex manly exerciſes are never graceful; that in them a tone and figure, as well as an air and deportment, of the maſculine kind, are always forbidding; and that men of ſenſibility deſire in every woman ſoft features, and a

flowing voice, a form, not robuſt, and demeanour delicate and gentle.'

Is not the following portrait—the portrait of a houſe ſlave? 'I am aſtoniſhed at the folly of many women, who are ſtill reproaching their huſbands for leaving them alone, for preferring this or that company to theirs, for treating them with this and the other mark of diſregard or indifference; when, to ſpeak the truth, they have themſelves in a great meaſure to blame. Not that I would juſtify the men in any thing wrong on their part. But had you behaved to them with more *reſpectful obſervance*, and a more *equal tenderneſs*; *ſtudying their humours*, *overlooking their miſtakes*, *ſubmitting to their opinions* in matters indifferent, paſſing by little inſtances of unevenneſs, caprice, or paſſion, giving *ſoft* anſwers to haſty words, complaining as ſeldom as poſſible, and making it your daily care to relieve their anxieties and prevent their wiſhes, to enliven the hour of dulneſs, and call up the ideas of felicity: had you purſued this conduct, I doubt not but you would have maintained and even increaſed their eſteem, ſo far as to have ſecured every degree of influence that could

‘ conduce to their virtue, or your mutual ‘ ſatisfaction; and your houſe might at this ‘ day have been the abode of domeſtic bliſs. Such a woman ought to be an angel—or ſhe is an aſs—for I diſcern not a trace of the human character, neither reaſon nor paſſion in this domeſtic drudge, whoſe being is abſorbed in that of a tyrant's.

Still Dr. Fordyce muſt have very little acquaintance with the human heart, if he really ſuppoſed that ſuch conduct would bring back wandering love, inſtead of exciting contempt. No, beauty, gentleneſs, &c. &c. may gain a heart; but eſteem, the only laſting affection, can alone be obtained by virtue ſupported by reaſon. It is reſpect for the underſtanding that keeps alive tenderneſs for the perſon.

As theſe volumes are ſo frequently put into the hands of young people, I have taken more notice of them than, ſtrictly ſpeaking, they deſerve; but as they have contributed to vitiate the taſte, and enervate the underſtanding of many of my fellow-creatures, I could not paſs them ſilently over.

## SECT. III.

SUCH paternal ſolicitude pervades Dr. Gregory's Legacy to his Daughters, that I enter on the taſk of criticiſm with affectionate reſpect; but as this little volume has many attractions to recommend it to the notice of the moſt reſpectable part of my ſex, I cannot ſilently paſs over arguments that ſo ſpeciouſly ſupport opinions which, I think, have had the moſt baneful effect on the morals and manners of the female world.

His eaſy familiar ſtyle is particularly ſuited to the tenor of his advice, and the melancholy tenderneſs which his reſpect for the memory of a beloved wife, diffuſes through the whole work, renders it very intereſting; yet there is a degree of conciſe elegance conſpicuous in many paſſages that diſturbs this ſympathy; and we pop on the author, when we only expected to meet the—father.

Beſides, having two objects in view, he ſeldom adhered ſteadily to either; for wiſhing to make his daughters amiable, and fearing leſt unhappineſs ſhould only be the conſequence, of inſtilling ſentiments that might draw them out of the track of common life without enabling them to act with conſonant independence and dignity, he checks the natural flow of his thoughts, and neither adviſes one thing nor the other.

In the preface he tells them a mournful truth, 'that they will hear, at leaſt once in their lives, the genuine ſentiments of a man who has no intereſt in deceiving them.'

Hapleſs woman! what can be expected from thee when the beings on whom thou art ſaid naturally to depend for reaſon and ſupport, have all an intereſt in deceiving thee! This is the root of the evil that has ſhed a corroding mildew on all thy virtues; and blighting in the bud thy opening faculties, has rendered thee the weak thing thou art! It is this ſeparate intereſt—this inſidious ſtate of warfare, that undermines morality, and divides mankind!

If love have made ſome women wretched—how many more has the cold unmeaning intercourſe of gallantry rendered vain and uſeleſs! yet this heartleſs attention to the ſex is reckoned ſo manly, ſo polite, that till ſociety is very differently organized, I fear, this veſtige of gothic manners will not be done away by a more reaſonable and affectionate mode of conduct. Beſides, to ſtrip it of its imaginary dignity, I muſt obſerve, that in the moſt uncivilized European ſtates this lip-ſervice prevails in a very great degree, accompanied with extreme diſſoluteneſs of morals. In Portugal, the country that I particularly allude to, it takes place of the moſt ſerious moral obligations; for a man is ſeldom aſſaſſinated when in the company of a woman. The ſavage hand of rapine is unnerved by this chivalrous ſpirit; and, if the ſtroke of vengeance cannot be ſtayed—the lady is entreated to pardon the rudeneſs and depart in peace, though ſprinkled, perhaps, with her huſband's or brother's blood.

I ſhall paſs over his ſtrictures on religion, becauſe I mean to diſcuſs that ſubject in a ſeparate chapter.

The remarks relative to behaviour, though many of them very ſenſible, I entirely diſapprove of, becauſe it appears to me to be beginning, as it were, at the wrong end. A cultivated underſtanding, and an affectionate heart, will never want ſtarched rules of decorum—ſomething more ſubſtantial than ſeemlineſs will be the reſult; and, without underſtanding the behaviour here recommended, would be rank affectation. Decorum, indeed, is the one thing needful!—decorum is to ſupplant nature, and baniſh all ſimplicity and variety of character out of the female world. Yet what good end can all this ſuperficial counſel produce? It is, however, much eaſier to point out this or that mode of behaviour, than to ſet the reaſon to work; but, when the mind has been ſtored with uſeful knowledge, and ſtrengthened by being employed, the regulation of the behaviour may ſafely be left to its guidance.

Why, for inſtance, ſhould the following caution be given when art of every kind muſt contaminate the mind; and why entangle the grand motives of action, which reaſon and religion equally combine to enforce, with pitiful worldly ſhifts and ſlight of hand tricks to gain the applauſe of gaping taſteleſs fools? ‘Be even cautious in diſplaying your good ‘ſenſe*. It will be thought you aſſume a ‘ſuperiority over the reſt of the company—‘But if you happen to have any learning,

‘keep it a profound ſecret, eſpecially from ‘the men, who generally look with a jealous ‘and malignant eye on a woman of great ‘parts, and a cultivated underſtanding.’ If men of real merit, as he afterwards obſerves, are ſuperior to this meanneſs, where is the neceſſity that the behaviour of the whole ſex ſhould be modulated to pleaſe fools, or men, who having little claim to reſpect as individuals, chooſe to keep cloſe in their phalanx. Men, indeed, who inſiſt on their common ſuperiority, having only this ſexual ſuperiority, are certainly very excuſable.

There would be no end to rules for behaviour, if it be proper always to adopt the tone of the company; for thus, for ever varying the key, a *flat* would often paſs for a *natural* note.

Surely it would have been wiſer to have adviſed women to improve themſelves till they roſe above the fumes of vanity; and then to let the public opinion come round—for where are rules of accommodation to ſtop? The narrow path of truth and virtue inclines neither to the right nor left—it is a ſtraightforward buſineſs, and they who are earneſtly purſuing their road, may bound over many decorous prejudices, without leaving modeſty behind. Make the heart clean, and give the head employment, and I will venture to predict that there will be nothing offenſive in the behaviour.

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* Let women once acquire good ſenſe—and if it deſerve the name, it will teach them; or, of what uſe will it be? how to employ it.

The air of faſhion, which many young people are ſo eager to attain, always ſtrikes me like the ſtudied attitudes of ſome modern prints, copied with taſteleſs ſervility after the antiques;—the ſoul is left out, and none of the parts are tied together by what may properly be termed character. This varniſh of faſhion, which ſeldom ſticks very cloſe to ſenſe, may dazzle the weak; but leave nature to itſelf, and it will ſeldom diſguſt the wiſe. Beſides, when a woman has ſufficient ſenſe not to pretend to any thing which ſhe does not underſtand in ſome degree, there is no need of determining to hide her talents under a buſhel. Let things take their natural courſe, and all will be well.

It is this ſyſtem of diſſimulation, throughout the volume, that I deſpiſe. Women are always to *ſeem* to be this and that—yet virtue might apoſtrophize them, in the words of

Hamlet—

Hamlet—Seems! I know not ſeems!—Have that within that paſſeth ſhow!—

Still the ſame tone occurs; for in another place, after recommending, without ſufficiently diſcriminating delicacy, he adds, ‘The men will complain of your reſerve. They will aſſure you that a franker behaviour would make you more amiable. But, truſt me, they are not ſincere when they tell you ſo.—I acknowledge, that on ſome occaſions it might render you more agreeable as companions, but it would make you leſs amiable as women: an important diſtinction, which many of your ſex are not aware of.’—

This deſire of being always women, is the very conſciouſneſs that degrades the ſex. Excepting with a lover, I muſt repeat with emphaſis, a former obſervation,—it would be well if they were only agreeable or rational companions.—But in this reſpect his advice is even inconſiſtent with a paſſage which I mean to quote with the moſt marked approbation.

‘The ſentiment, that a woman may allow all innocent freedoms, provided her virtue is ſecure, is both groſsly indelicate and dan-

‘ gerous, and has proved fatal to many of ‘ your ſex.’ With this opinion I perfectly coincide. A man, or a woman, of any feeling, muſt always wiſh to convince a beloved object that it is the careſſes of the individual, not the ſex, that is received and returned with pleaſure; and, that the heart, rather than the ſenſes, is moved. Without this natural delicacy, love becomes a ſelfiſh perſonal gratification that ſoon degrades the character.

I carry this ſentiment ſtill further. Affection, when love is out of the queſtion, authoriſes many perſonal endearments, that naturally flowing from an innocent heart, give life to the behaviour; but the perſonal intercourſe of appetite, gallantry, or vanity, is deſpicable. When a man ſqueezes the hand of a pretty woman, handing her to a carriage, whom he has never ſeen before, ſhe will conſider ſuch an impertinent freedom in the light of an inſult, if ſhe have any true delicacy, inſtead of being flattered by this unmeaning homage to beauty. Theſe are the privileges of friendſhip, or the momentary homage which the heart pays to virtue, when

it flaſhes ſuddenly on the notice—mere animal ſpirits have no claim to the kindneſſes of affection!

Wiſhing to feed the affections with what is now the food of vanity, I would fain perſuade my ſex to act from ſimpler principles. Let them merit love, and they will obtain it, though they may never be told that—‘ The ‘ power of a fine woman over the hearts ‘ of men, of men of the fineſt parts, is even ‘ beyond what ſhe conceives.’

I have already noticed the narrow cautions with reſpect to duplicity, female ſoftneſs, delicacy of conſtitution; for theſe are the changes which he rings round without ceaſing—in a more decorous manner, it is true, than Rouſſeau; but it all comes home to the ſame point, and whoever is at the trouble to analyze theſe ſentiments, will find the firſt principles not quite ſo delicate as the ſuperſtructure.

The ſubject of amuſements is treated in too curſory a manner; but with the ſame ſpirit.

When I treat of friendſhip, love, and marriage, it will be found that we materially differ in opinion; I ſhall not then foreſtall what I have to obſerve on theſe important ſubjects; but confine my remarks to the general tenor of them, to that cautious family prudence, to thoſe confined views of partial unenlightened affection, which exclude pleaſure and improvement, by vainly wiſhing to ward off ſorrow and error—and by thus guarding the heart and mind, deſtroy alſo all their energy.—It is far better to be often deceived than never to truſt; to be diſappointed in love than never to love; to loſe a huſband's fondneſs than forfeit his eſteem.

Happy would it be for the world, and for individuals, of courſe, if all this unavailing ſolicitude to attain worldly happineſs, on a confined plan, were turned into an anxious deſire to improve the underſtanding.—‘ Wiſdom is the principal thing: *therefore* get wiſdom; and with all thy gettings get underſtanding.’—‘ How long, ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity, and hate knowledge?’ Saith Wiſdom to the daughters of men!—

## SECT. IV.

I do not mean to allude to all the writers who have written on the ſubject of female manners—it would, in fact, be only beating over the old ground, for they have, in general, written in the ſame ſtrain; but attacking the boaſted prerogative of man—the prerogative that may emphatically be called the iron ſceptre of tyranny, the original ſin of tyrants, I declare againſt all power built on prejudices, however hoary.

If the ſubmiſſion demanded be founded on juſtice—there is no appealing to a higher power—for God is Juſtice itſelf. Let us then, as children of the ſame parent, if not baſtardized by being the younger born, reaſon together, and learn to ſubmit to the authority of reaſon—when her voice is diſtinctly heard. But, if it be proved, that this throne of prerogative only reſts on a chaotic maſs of prejudices, that have no inherent principle of order to keep them together, or on an elephant, tortoiſe, or even the mighty ſhoulders of a ſon of the earth, they may eſcape, who dare to brave the conſequence, without any breach of duty, without ſinning againſt the order of things.

Whilſt reaſon raiſes man above the brutal herd, and death is big with promiſes, they alone are ſubject to blind authority who have no reliance on their own ſtrength. They are free—who will be free[*]!'—

The being who can govern itſelf has nothing to fear in life; but if any thing is dearer than its own reſpect, the price muſt be paid to the laſt farthing. Virtue, like every thing valuable, muſt be loved for herſelf alone; or ſhe will not take up her abode with us. She will not impart that peace, 'which paſſeth 'underſtanding,' when ſhe is merely made the ſtilts of reputation; and reſpected, with phariſaical exactneſs, becauſe 'honeſty is the 'beſt policy.'

That the plan of life which enables us to carry ſome knowledge and virtue into another world, is the one beſt calculated to enſure content in this, cannot be denied; yet few people act according to this principle, though it be univerſally allowed that it admit not

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[*] 'He is the free man, whom the *truth* makes free!'
*Cowper.*

of diſpute. Preſent pleaſure, or preſent power, carry before it theſe ſober convictions; and it is for the day, not for life, that man bargains with happineſs. How few!—how very few! have ſufficient foreſight, or reſolution, to endure a ſmall evil at the moment, to avoid a greater hereafter.

Woman in particular, whoſe virtue [*] is built on mutable prejudices, ſeldom attains to this greatneſs of mind; ſo that, becoming the ſlave of her own feelings, ſhe is eaſily ſubjugated by thoſe of others. Thus degraded, her reaſon, her miſty reaſon! is employed rather to burniſh than to ſnap her chains.

Indignantly have I heard women argue in the ſame track as men, and adopt the ſentiments that brutalize them, with all the pertinacity of ignorance.

I muſt illuſtrate my aſſertion by a few examples. Mrs. Piozzi, who often repeated by rote, what ſhe did not underſtand, comes forward with Johnſonian periods.

'Seek not for happineſs in ſingularity; 'and dread a refinement of wiſdom as a deviation into folly.' Thus ſhe dogmatically addreſſes a new married man; and to elucidate this pompous exordium, ſhe adds, ‘I ſaid that the perſon of your lady would not grow more pleaſing to you, but pray let her never ſuſpect that it grows leſs ſo: that a woman will pardon an affront to her underſtanding much ſooner than one to her perſon, is well known; nor will any of us contradict the aſſertion. All our attainments, all our arts, are employed to gain and keep the heart of man; and what mortification can exceed the diſappointment, if the end be not obtained? There is no reproof however pointed, no puniſhment however ſevere, that a woman of ſpirit will not prefer to neglect; and if ſhe can endure it without complaint, it only proves that ſhe means to make herſelf amends by the attention of others for the ſlights of her huſband!’

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[*] I mean to uſe a word that comprehends more than chaſtity the ſexual virtue.

Theſe are truly maſculine ſentiments.—‘All our *arts* are employed to gain and keep the heart of man:’—and what is the inference?—if her perſon, and was there ever a perſon, though formed with Mediciſan ſymmetry, that was not ſlighted? be neglected, ſhe will make herſelf amends by endeavouring to pleaſe other men. Noble morality!

But thus is the underſtanding of the whole ſex affronted, and their virtue deprived of the common baſis of virtue. A woman muſt know, that her perſon cannot be as pleaſing to her huſband as it was to her lover, and if ſhe be offended with him for being a human creature, ſhe may as well whine about the loſs of his heart as about any other fooliſh thing.—And this very want of diſcernment or unreaſonable anger, proves that he could not change his fondneſs for her perſon into affection for her virtues or reſpect for her underſtanding.

Whilſt women avow, and act up to ſuch opinions, their underſtandings, at leaſt, deſerve the contempt and obloquy that men, *who never* inſult their perſons, have pointedly levelled at the female mind. And it is the ſentiments of theſe polite men, who do not wiſh to be encumbered with mind, that vain women thoughtleſsly adopt. Yet they ſhould know, that inſulted reaſon alone can ſpread that *ſacred* reſerve about the perſon, which renders human affections, for human affections have always ſome baſe alloy, as permanent as is conſiſtent with the grand end of exiſtence—the attainment of virtue.

The Baroneſs de Stael ſpeaks the ſame language as the lady juſt cited, with more enthuſiaſm. Her eulogium on Rouſſeau was accidentally put into my hands, and her ſentiments, the ſentiments of too many of my ſex, may ſerve as the text for a few comments. ‘Though Rouſſeau,’ ſhe obſerves, ‘has endeavoured to prevent women from interfering in public affairs, and acting a brilliant part in the theatre of politics; yet in ſpeaking of them, how much has he done it to their ſatisfaction! If he wiſhed to deprive them of ſome rights foreign to their ſex, how has he for ever reſtored to them all thoſe to which it has a claim! And in attempting to diminiſh their influence over the deliberations of men, how ſacredly has he eſtabliſhed the empire they have over their happineſs! In aiding them to deſcend from an uſurped throne, he has firmly ſeated them upon that to which they were deſtined by nature; and though he be full of indignation againſt them when they endeavour to reſemble men, yet when they come before him with all the *charms, weakneſſes, virtues* and *errors*, of their ſex, his reſpect for their *perſons* amounts almoſt to

adoration.’ True!—For never was there a ſenſualiſt who paid more fervent adoration at the ſhrine of beauty. So devout, indeed, was his reſpect for the perſon, that excepting the virtue of chaſtity, for obvious reaſons, he only wiſhed to ſee it embelliſhed by charms, weakneſſes, and errors. He was afraid leſt the auſterity of reaſon ſhould diſturb the ſoft playfulneſs of love. The maſter wiſhed to have a meretricious ſlave to fondle, entirely dependent on his reaſon and bounty; he did not want a companion, whom he ſhould be compelled to eſteem, or a friend to whom he could confide the care of his children's education, ſhould death deprive them of their father, before he had fulfilled the ſacred taſk. He denies woman reaſon, ſhuts her out from knowledge, and turns her aſide from truth; yet his pardon is granted, becauſe ‘he admits the paſſion of love.’ It would require ſome ingenuity to ſhew why women were to be under ſuch an obligation to him for thus admitting love; when it is clear that he admits it only for the relaxation of men, and to perpetuate the ſpecies; but he talked with paſſion, and that powerful ſpell worked on the ſenſibility of a young encomiaſt. ‘ What ſignifies it,’ purſues this rhapſodiſt, ‘ to women, that his reaſon diſputes with them the empire, when his ‘ heart is devoutedly theirs.’ It is not empire,—but equality, that they ſhould contend for. Yet, if they only wiſhed to lengthen out their ſway, they ſhould not entirely truſt to their perſons, for though beauty may gain a heart, it cannot keep it, even while the beauty is in full bloom, unleſs the mind lend, at leaſt, ſome graces.

When women are once ſufficiently enlightened to diſcover their real intereſt, on a grand ſcale, they will, I am perſuaded, be very ready to reſign all the prerogatives of love, that are not mutual, ſpeaking of them as laſting prerogatives, for the calm ſatisfaction of friendſhip, and the tender confidence of habitual eſteem. Before marriage they will not aſſume any inſolent airs, nor afterwards abjectly ſubmit; but endeavouring to act like reaſonable creatures, in both ſituations, they will not be tumbled from a throne to a ſtool.

Madame Genlis has written ſeveral entertaining books for children; and her Letters on Education afford many uſeful hints, that

ſenſible parents will certainly avail themſelves of; but her views are narrow, and her prejudices as unreaſonable as ſtrong.

I ſhall paſs over her vehement argument in favour of the eternity of future puniſhments, becauſe I bluſh to think that a human being ſhould ever argue vehemently in ſuch a cauſe, and only make a few remarks on her abſurd manner of making the parental authority ſupplant reaſon. For every where does ſhe inculcate not only *blind* ſubmiſſion to parents; but to the opinion of the world *.

She tells a ſtory of a young man engaged by his father's expreſs deſire to a girl of fortune. Before the marriage could take place, ſhe is deprived of her fortune, and thrown friendleſs on the world. The father practiſes the moſt infamous arts to ſeparate his ſon from her, and when the ſon detects his villany, and, following the dictates of honour, marries the girl, nothing but miſery enſues, becauſe forſooth he married *without* his father's conſent. On what ground can religion or morality reſt when juſtice is thus ſet at defiance? In the ſame ſtyle ſhe repreſents an accompliſhed young woman, as ready to marry any body that her *mamma* pleaſed to recommend; and, as actually marrying the young man of her own choice, without feeling any emotions of paſſion, becauſe that a well educated girl had not time to be in love. Is it poſſible to have much reſpect for a ſyſtem of education that thus inſults reaſon and nature?

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* A perſon is not to act in this or that way, though convinced they are right in ſo doing, becauſe ſome equivocal circumſtances may lead the world to *ſuſpect* that they acted from different motives.—This is ſacrificing the ſubſtance for a ſhadow. Let people but watch their own hearts, and act rightly, as far as they can judge, and they may patiently wait till the opinion of the world comes round. It is beſt to be directed by a ſimple motive—for juſtice has too often been ſacrificed to propriety;—another word for convenience.

Many ſimilar opinions occur in her writings, mixed with ſentiments that do honour to her head and heart. Yet ſo much ſuperſtition is mixed with her religion, and ſo much worldly wiſdom with her morality, that I ſhould not let a young perſon read her works, unleſs I could afterwards converſe on the ſubjects, and point out the contradictions.

Mrs. Chapone's Letters are written with ſuch good ſenſe, and unaffected humility, and contain ſo many uſeful obſervations, that

I only mention them to pay the worthy writer this tribute of reſpect. I cannot, it is true, always coincide in opinion with her; but I always reſpect her.

The very word reſpect brings Mrs. Macaulay to my remembrance. The woman of the greateſt abilities, undoubtedly, that this country has ever produced.—And yet this woman has been ſuffered to die without ſufficient reſpect being paid to her memory.

Poſterity, however, will be more juſt; and remember that Catharine Macaulay was an example of intellectual acquirements ſuppoſed to be incompatible with the weakneſs of her ſex. In her ſtyle of writing, indeed, no ſex appears, for it is like the ſenſe it conveys, ſtrong and clear.

I will not call her's a maſculine underſtanding, becauſe I admit not of ſuch an arrogant aſſumption of reaſon; but I contend that it was a ſound one, and that her judgment, the matured fruit of profound thinking, was a proof that a woman can acquire judgment, in the full extent of the word. Poſſeſſing more penetration than ſagacity, more underſtanding than fancy, ſhe writes with ſober energy and argumentative cloſe-neſs; yet ſympathy and benevolence give an intereſt to her ſentiments, and that vital heat to arguments, which forces the reader to weigh them [*].

When I firſt thought of writing theſe ſtrictures I anticipated Mrs. Macaulay's approbation, with a little of that ſanguine ardour, which it has been the buſineſs of my life to depreſs; but ſoon heard with the ſickly qualm of diſappointed hope; and the ſtill ſeriouſneſs of regret—that ſhe was no more!

## SECT. V.

TAKING a view of the different works which have been written on education, Lord Cheſterfield's Letters muſt not be ſilently paſſed over. Not that I mean to analyze his unmanly, immoral ſyſtem, or even to cull any of the uſeful, ſhrewd remarks which occur in his frivolous correſpondence—No, I only mean to make a few reflections on the avowed tendency of them—the art of acquiring an early knowledge of the world. An art, I

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[*] Coinciding in opinion with Mrs. Macaulay relative to many branches of education, I refer to her valuable work, inſtead of quoting her ſentiments to ſupport my own.

will venture to aſſert, that preys ſecretly, like the worm in the bud, on the expanding powers, and turns to poiſon the generous juices which ſhould mount with vigour in the youthful frame, inſpiring warm affections and great reſolves [*].

For every thing, ſaith the wiſe man, there is a ſeaſon;—and who would look for the fruits of autumn during the genial months of ſpring? But this is mere declamation, and I mean to reaſon with thoſe worldly-wiſe inſtructors, who, inſtead of cultivating the judgment inſtil prejudices, and render hard the heart that gradual experience would only have cooled. An early acquaintance with human infirmities; or, what is termed knowledge of the world, is the ſureſt way, in my opinion, to contract the heart and damp the natural youthful ardour which produces not only great talents, but great virtues. For the vain attempt to bring forth the fruit of experience, before the ſapling has thrown out its leaves, only exhauſts its ſtrength, and prevents its aſſuming a natural form; juſt as the form and ſtrength of ſubſiding metals are injured when the attraction of coheſion is diſturbed.

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[*] That children ought to be conſtantly guarded againſt the vices and follies of the world, appears, to me, a very miſtaken opinion; for in the courſe of my experience, and my eyes have looked abroad, I never knew a youth educated in this manner, who had early imbibed theſe chilling ſuſpicions, and repeated by rote the heſitating *if* of age, that did not prove a ſelfiſh character.

Tell me, ye who have ſtudied the human mind, is it not a ſtrange way to fix principles by ſhowing young people that they are ſeldom ſtable? And how can they be fortified by habits when they are proved to be fallacious by example? Why is the ardour of youth thus to be damped, and the luxuriancy of fancy cut to the quick? This dry caution may, it is true, guard a character from worldly miſchances; but will infallibly preclude excellence in either virtue or knowledge*. The ſtumbling-block thrown acroſs every path by ſuſpicion, will prevent any vigorous exertions of genius or benevolence, and life will be ſtripped of its moſt alluring charm long before its calm evening, when man ſhould retire to contemplation for comfort and ſupport.

A young man who has been bred up with domeſtic friends, and led to ſtore his mind with as much ſpeculative knowledge as can be acquired by reading and the natural reflections which youthful ebullitions of animal ſpirits and inſtinctive feelings inſpire, will enter the world with warm and erroneous expectations. But this appears to be the courſe of nature; and in morals, as well as in works of taſte, we ſhould be obſervant of her ſacred indications, and not preſume to lead when we ought obſequiouſly to follow.

In the world few people act from principle; preſent feelings, and early habits, are the grand ſprings: but how would the former be deadened, and the latter rendered iron corroding fetters, if the world were ſhewn to young people juſt as it is; when no knowledge of mankind or their own hearts, ſlowly obtained by experience, rendered them forbearing? Their fellow creatures would not then be viewed as frail beings; like themſelves, condemned to ſtruggle with human infirmities, and ſometimes diſplaying the light, and ſometimes the dark ſide of their character; extorting alternate feelings of love and diſguſt; but guarded againſt as beaſts of prey, till every enlarged ſocial feeling, in a word, —humanity, was eradicated.

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* I have already obſerved that an early knowledge of the world, obtained in a natural way, by mixing in the world, has the ſame effect: inſtancing officers and women.

In life, on the contrary, as we gradually diſcover the imperfections of our nature, we diſcover virtues, and various circumſtances attach us to our fellow creatures, when we mix with them, and view the ſame objects, that are never thought of in acquiring a haſty unnatural knowledge of the world. We ſee a folly ſwell into a vice, by almoſt imperceptible degrees, and pity while we blame; but, if the hideous monſter burſt ſuddenly on our ſight, fear and diſguſt rendering us more ſevere than man ought to be, might lead us with blind zeal to uſurp the character of omnipotence, and denounce damnation on our fellow mortals, forgetting that we cannot read the heart, and that we have ſeeds of the ſame vices lurking in our own.

I have already remarked that we expect more from inſtruction, than mere inſtruction can produce: for, inſtead of preparing young people to encounter the evils of life with dignity, and to acquire wiſdom and virtue by the exerciſe of their own faculties, precepts are heaped upon precepts, and blind obedience required, when conviction ſhould be brought home to reaſon.

Suppoſe, for inſtance, that a young perſon in the firſt ardour of friendſhip deifies the beloved object—what harm can ariſe from this miſtaken enthuſiaſtic attachment? Perhaps it is neceſſary for virtue firſt to appear in a human form to impreſs youthful hearts; the ideal model, which a more matured and exalted mind looks up to, and ſhapes for itſelf, would elude their ſight. He who loves not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God? aſked the wiſeſt of men.

It is natural for youth to adorn the firſt object of its affection with every good quality, and the emulation produced by ignorance, or, to ſpeak with more propriety, by inexperience, brings forward the mind capable of forming ſuch an affection, and when, in the lapſe of time, perfection is found not to be within the reach of mortals, virtue, abſtractedly, is thought beautiful, and wiſdom ſublime. Admiration then gives place to friendſhip, properly ſo called, becauſe it is cemented by eſteem; and the being walks alone only dependent on heaven for that emulous panting after perfection which ever glows in a noble mind. But this knowledge a man muſt gain by the exertion of his own faculties; and this is ſurely the bleſſed fruit of diſappointed hope! for He who delighteth to diffuſe happineſs and ſhew mercy to the weak creatures, who are learning to know him, never implanted a good propenſity to be a tormenting ignis fatuus.

Our trees are now allowed to ſpread with wild luxuriance, nor do we expect by force to combine the majeſtic marks of time with youthful graces; but wait patiently till they have ſtruck deep their root, and braved many a ſtorm.—Is the mind then, which, in proportion to its dignity, advances more ſlowly towards perfection, to be treated with leſs reſpect? To argue from analogy, every thing around us is in a progreſſive ſtate; and when an unwelcome knowledge of life produces almoſt a ſatiety of life, and we diſcover by the natural courſe of things that all that is done under the ſun is vanity, we are drawing near the awful cloſe of the drama. The days of activity and hope are over, and the opportunities which the firſt ſtage of exiſtence has afforded of advancing in the ſcale of intelligence, muſt ſoon be ſummed up.—A knowledge at this period of the futility of life, or earlier, if obtained by experience, is very

uſeful, becauſe it is natural; but when a frail being is ſhewn the follies and vices of man, that he may be taught prudently to guard againſt the common caſualties of life by ſacrificing his heart—ſurely it is not ſpeaking harſhly to call it the wiſdom of this world, contraſted with the nobler fruit of piety and experience.

I will venture a paradox, and deliver my opinion without reſerve; if men were only born to form a circle of life and death, it would be wiſe to take every ſtep that foreſight could ſuggeſt to render life happy. Moderation in every purſuit would then be ſupreme wiſdom; and the prudent voluptuary might enjoy a degree of content, though he neither cultivated his underſtanding nor kept his heart pure. Prudence, ſuppoſing we were mortal, would be true wiſdom, or, to be more explicit, would procure the greateſt portion of happineſs, conſidering the whole of life, but knowledge beyond the conveniences of life would be a curſe.

Why ſhould we injure our health by cloſe ſtudy? The exalted pleaſure which intellectual purſuits afford would ſcarcely be equivalent to the hours of languor that follow; eſpecially, if it be neceſſary to take into the reckoning the doubts and diſappointments that cloud our reſearches. Vanity and vexation cloſe every inquiry: for the cauſe which we particularly wiſhed to diſcover flies like the horizon before us as we advance. The ignorant, on the contrary, reſemble children, and ſuppoſe, that if they could walk ſtraight forward they ſhould at laſt arrive where the earth and clouds meet. Yet, diſappointed as we are in our reſearches, the mind gains ſtrength by the exerciſe, ſufficient, perhaps, to comprehend the anſwers which, in another ſtep of exiſtence, it may receive to the anxious queſtions it aſked, when the underſtanding with feeble wing was fluttering round the viſible effects to dive into the hidden cauſe.

The paſſions alſo, the winds of life, would be uſeleſs, if not injurious, did the ſubſtance which compoſes our thinking being, after we have thought in vain, only become the ſupport of vegetable life, and invigorate a cabbage, or bluſh in a roſe. The appetites would anſwer every earthly purpoſe, and produce more moderate and permanent happineſs. But the powers of the ſoul that are of little uſe here, and, probably, diſturb our animal enjoyments, even while conſcious dignity makes us glory in poſſeſſing them, prove that life is merely an education, a ſtate of infancy, to which the only hopes worth cheriſhing ſhould not be ſacrificed. I mean, therefore, to infer, that we ought to have a preciſe idea of what we wiſh to attain by education, for the immortality of the ſoul is contradicted by the actions of many people who firmly profeſs the belief.

If you mean to ſecure eaſe and proſperity on earth as the firſt conſideration, and leave futurity to provide for itſelf; you act prudently in giving your child an early inſight into the weakneſſes of his nature. You may not, it is true, make an Inkle of him; but do not imagine that he will ſtick to more than the letter of the law, who has very early imbibed a mean opinion of human nature; nor will he think it neceſſary to riſe much above the common ſtandard. He may avoid groſs vices, becauſe honeſty is the beſt policy; but he will never aim at attaining great virtues. The example of writers and artiſts will illuſtrate this remark.

I muſt therefore venture to doubt whether what has been thought an axiom in morals may not have been a dogmatical aſſertion made by men who have coolly ſeen mankind through the medium of books, and ſay, in direct contradiction to them, that the regulation of the paſſions is not, always, wiſdom.—On the contrary, it ſhould ſeem, that one reaſon why men have ſuperiour judgment, and more fortitude than women, is undoubtedly this, that they give a freer ſcope to the grand paſſions, and by more frequently going aſtray enlarge their minds. If then by the exerciſe of their own * reaſon they fix on ſome ſtable principle, they have probably to thank the force of their paſſions, nouriſhed by *falſe* views of life, and permitted to overleap the boundary that ſecures content. But if, in the dawn of life, we could ſoberly ſurvey the ſcenes before as in perſpective, and ſee every thing in its true colours, how could the paſſions gain ſufficient ſtrength to unfold the faculties?

Let me now as from an eminence ſurvey the world ſtripped of all its falſe deluſive charms. The clear atmoſphere enables me to ſee each object in its true point of view, while my heart is ſtill. I am calm as the

proſpect in a morning when the miſts, ſlowly diſperſing, ſilently unveil the beauties of nature, refreſhed by reſt.

In what light will the world now appear?—I rub my eyes and think, perchance, that I am juſt awaking from a lively dream.

I ſee the ſons and daughters of men purſuing ſhadows, and anxiouſly waſting their powers to feed paſſions which have no adequate object—if the very exceſs of theſe blind impulſes, pampered by that lying, yet conſtantly truſted guide, the imagination, did not, by preparing them for ſome other ſtate, render ſhort-ſighted mortals wiſer without their own concurrence; or, what comes to the ſame thing, when they were purſuing ſome imaginary preſent good.

After viewing objects in this light, it would not be very fanciful to imagine that this world was a ſtage on which a pantomime is daily performed for the amuſement of ſuperiour beings. How would they be diverted to ſee the ambitious man conſuming himſelf by running after a phantom, and, 'purſuing 'the bubble fame in the cannon's mouth' that was to blow him to nothing: for when conſciouſneſs is loſt, it matters not whether we

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* 'I find that all is but lip-wiſdom which wants experience,' ſays Sidney.

mount in a whirlwind or deſcend in rain. And ſhould they compaſſionately invigorate his ſight and ſhew him the thorny path which led to eminence, that like a quickſand ſinks as he aſcends, diſappointing his hopes when almoſt within his graſp, would he not leave to others the honour of amuſing them, and labour to ſecure the preſent moment, though from the conſtitution of his nature he would not find it very eaſy to catch the flying ſtream? Such ſlaves are we to hope and fear!

But, vain as the ambitious man's purſuits would be, he is often ſtriving for ſomething more ſubſtantial than fame—that indeed would be the verieſt meteor, the wildeſt fire that could lure a man to ruin.—What! renounce the moſt trifling gratification to be applauded when he ſhould be no more! Wherefore this ſtruggle, whether man is mortal or immortal, if that noble paſſion did not really raiſe the being above his fellows?—

And love! What diverting ſcenes would it produce—Pantaloon's tricks muſt yield to more egregious folly. To ſee a mortal adorn an object with imaginary charms, and then fall down and worſhip the idol which he had himſelf ſet up—how ridiculous! But what

ſerious conſequences enſue to rob man of that portion of happineſs, which the Deity by calling him into exiſtence has (or, on what can his attributes reſt?) indubitably promiſed: would not all the purpoſes of life have been much better fulfilled if he had only felt what has been termed phyſical love? And, would not the ſight of the object, not ſeen through the medium of the imagination, ſoon reduce the paſſion to an appetite, if reflection, the noble diſtinction of man, did not give it force, and make it an inſtrument to raiſe him above this earthy droſs, by teaching him to love the centre of all perfection; whoſe wiſdom appears clearer and clearer in the works of nature, in proportion as reaſon is illuminated and exalted by contemplation, and by acquiring that love of order which the ſtruggles of paſſion produce?

The habit of reflection, and the knowledge attained by foſtering any paſſion, might be ſhewn to be equally uſeful, though the object be proved equally fallacious; for they would all appear in the ſame light, if they were not magnified by the governing paſſion implanted in us by the Author of all good, to call forth and ſtrengthen the faculties of each individual, and enable it to attain all the experience that an infant can obtain, who does certain things, it cannot tell why.

I deſcend from my height, and mixing with my fellow-creatures, feel myſelf hurried along the common ſtream; ambition, love, hope, and fear, exert their wonted power, though we be convinced by reaſon that their preſent and moſt attractive promiſes are only lying dreams; but had the cold hand of circumſpection damped each generous feeling before it had left any permanent character, or fixed ſome habit, what could be expected, but ſelfiſh prudence and reaſon juſt riſing above inſtinct? Who that has read Dean Swift's diſguſting deſcription of the Yahoos, and inſipid one of Houyhnhnm with a philoſophical eye, can avoid ſeeing the futility of degrading the paſſions, or making man reſt in contentment?

The youth ſhould *act*; for had he the experience of a grey head he would be fitter for death than life, though his virtues, rather reſiding in his head than his heart, could produce nothing great, and his underſtanding, prepared for this world, would not, by its noble flights, prove that it had a title to a better.

Beſides, it is not poſſible to give a young perſon a juſt view of life; he muſt have ſtruggled with his own paſſions before he can eſtimate the force of the temptation which betrayed his brother into vice. Thoſe who are entering life, and thoſe who are departing, ſee the world from ſuch very different points of view, that they can ſeldom think alike, unleſs the unfledged reaſon of the former never attempted a ſolitary flight.

When we hear of ſome daring crime—it comes full on us in the deepeſt ſhade of turpitude, and raiſes indignation; but the eye that gradually ſaw the darkneſs thicken, muſt obſerve it with more compaſſionate forbearance. The world cannot be ſeen by an unmoved ſpectator, we muſt mix in the throng, and feel as men feel before we can judge of their feelings. If we mean, in ſhort, to live in the world to grow wiſer and better, and not merely to enjoy the good things of life, we muſt attain a knowledge of others at the ſame time that we become acquainted with ourſelves—knowledge acquired any other way only hardens the heart and perplexes the underſtanding.

I may be told, that the knowledge thus acquired, is ſometimes purchaſed at too dear a rate. I can only anſwer that I very much doubt whether any knowledge can be attained without labour and ſorrow; and thoſe who wiſh to ſpare their children both, ſhould not complain, if they are neither wiſe nor virtuous. They only aimed at making them prudent; and prudence, early in life, is but the cautious craft of ignorant ſelf-love.

I have obſerved that young people, to whoſe education particular attention has been paid, have, in general, been very ſuperficial and conceited, and far from pleaſing in any reſpect, becauſe they had neither the unſuſpecting warmth of youth, nor the cool depth of age. I cannot help imputing this unnatural appearance principally to that haſty premature inſtruction, which leads them preſumptuouſly to repeat all the crude notions they have taken upon truſt, ſo that the careful education which they received, makes them all their lives the ſlaves of prejudices.

Mental as well as bodily exertion is, at firſt, irkſome; ſo much ſo, that the many would fain let others both work and think for them. An obſervation which I have often made will illuſtrate my meaning. When in a circle of ſtrangers, or acquaintances, a perſon of moderate abilities aſſerts an opinion with heat, I will venture to affirm, for I have traced this fact home, very often, that it is a prejudice. Theſe echoes have a high reſpect for the underſtanding of ſome relation or friend, and without fully comprehending the opinions, which they are ſo eager to retail, they maintain them with a degree of obſtinacy, that would ſurpriſe even the perſon who concocted them.

I know that a kind of faſhion now prevails of reſpecting prejudices; and when any one dares to face them, though actuated by humanity and armed by reaſon, he is ſuperciliouſly aſked whether his anceſtors were fools. No, I ſhould reply; opinions, at firſt, of every deſcription, were all, probably, conſidered, and therefore were founded on ſome reaſon; yet not unfrequently, of courſe, it was rather a local expedient than a fundamental principle, that would be reaſonable at all times. But, moſs-covered opinions aſſume the diſproportioned form of prejudices, when they are indolently adopted only becauſe age has given them a venerable aſpect, though the reaſon on which they were built ceaſes to be a reaſon, or cannot be traced. Why are we to love prejudices, merely becauſe they are prejudices [*]? A prejudice is a fond obſtinate perſuaſion for which we can give no reaſon; for the moment a reaſon can be given for an opinion, it ceaſes to be a prejudice, though it may be an error in judgment: and are we then adviſed to cheriſh opinions only to ſet reaſon at defiance? This mode of arguing, if arguing it may be called, reminds me of what is vulgarly termed a woman's reaſon. For women ſometimes declare that they love, or believe, certain things, *becauſe* they love, or believe them.

It is impoſſible to converſe with people to any purpoſe, who, in this ſtyle, only uſe affirmatives and negatives. Before you can bring them to a point, to ſtart fairly from, you muſt go back to the ſimple principles that were antecedent to the prejudices broached by power; and it is ten to one but you are ſtopped by the philoſophical aſſertion, that certain principles are as practically falſe as

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[*] Vide Mr. Burke.

they are abſtractly true [*]. Nay, it may be inferred, that reaſon has whiſpered ſome doubts, for it generally happens that people aſſert their opinions with the greateſt heat when they begin to waver; ſtriving to drive out their own doubts by convincing their opponent, they grow angry when thoſe gnawing doubts are thrown back to prey on themſelves.

The fact is, that men expect from education, what education cannot give. A ſagacious parent or tutor may ſtrengthen the body and ſharpen the inſtruments by which the child is to gather knowledge; but the honey muſt be the reward of the individual's own induſtry. It is almoſt as abſurd to attempt to make a youth wiſe by the experience of another, as to expect the body to grow ſtrong by the exerciſe which is only talked of, or ſeen [†]. Many of thoſe children whoſe conduct has been moſt narrowly watched, become the weakeſt men, becauſe their inſtructors only inſtil certain notions into their minds, that have no other foundation than their authority; and if they are loved or reſpected, the mind is cramped in its exertions and wavering in its advances. The buſineſs of education in this caſe, is only to conduct the ſhooting tendrils to a proper pole; yet after laying precept upon precept, without allowing a child to acquire judgment itſelf, parents expect them to act in the ſame manner by this borrowed fallacious light, as if they had illuminated it themſelves; and be, when they enter life, what their parents are at the cloſe. They do not conſider that the tree, and even the human body, does not ſtrengthen its fibres till it has reached its full growth.

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[*] 'Convince a man againſt his will,
'And he's of the ſame opinion ſtill.'

[†] 'One ſees nothing when one is content to contemplate only; it is neceſſary to act oneſelf to be able to ſee how others act.' *Rouſſeau.*

There appears to be ſomething analogous in the mind. The ſenſes and the imagination give a form to the character, during childhood and youth; and the underſtanding, as life advances, gives firmneſs to the firſt fair purpoſes of ſenſibility—till virtue, ariſing rather from the clear conviction of reaſon than the impulſe of the heart, morality is made to reſt on a rock againſt which the ſtorms of paſſion vainly beat.

I hope I ſhall not be miſunderſtood when I ſay, that religion will not have this condenſing energy, unleſs it be founded on reaſon. If it be merely the refuge of weakneſs or wild fanaticiſm, and not a governing principle of conduct, drawn from ſelf-knowledge, and a rational opinion reſpecting the attributes of God, what can it be expected to produce? The religion which conſiſts in warming the affections, and exalting the imagination, is only the poetical part, and may afford the individual pleaſure without rendering it a more moral being. It may be a ſubſtitute for worldly purſuits; yet narrow, inſtead of enlarging the heart: but virtue muſt be loved as in itſelf ſublime and excellent, and not for the advantages it procures or the evils it averts, if any great degree of excellence be expected. Men will not become moral when they only build airy caſtles in a future world to compenſate for the diſappointments which they meet with in this; if they turn their thoughts from relative duties to religious reveries.

Moſt proſpects in life are marred by the ſhuffling worldly wiſdom of men, who, forgetting that they cannot ſerve God and mammon, endeavour to blend contradictory things.—If you wiſh to make your ſon rich, purſue one courſe—if you are only anxious to make him virtuous, you muſt take another; but do not imagine that you can bound from one road to the other without loſing your way [*].

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[*] See an excellent eſſay on this ſubject by Mrs. Barbauld, in *Miſcellaneous Pieces in Proſe.*

## CHAP. VI.

### THE EFFECT WHICH AN EARLY ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS HAS UPON THE CHARACTER.

Educated in the enervating ſtyle recommended by the writers on whom I have been animadverting; and not having a chance, from their ſubordinate ſtate in ſociety, to recover their loſt ground, is it ſurpriſing that women every where appear a defect in nature? Is it ſurpriſing, when we conſider what a determinate effect an early aſſociation of ideas has on the character, that they neglect their underſtandings, and turn all their attention to their perſons?

The great advantages which naturally reſult from ſtoring the mind with knowledge, are obvious from the following conſiderations. The aſſociation of our ideas is either habitual or inſtantaneous; and the latter mode ſeems rather to depend on the original temperature of the mind than on the will. When the ideas, and matters of fact, are once taken in, they lie by for uſe, till ſome fortuitous circumſtance makes the information dart into the mind with illuſtrative force, that has been received at very different periods of our lives. Like the lightning's flaſh are many recollections; one idea aſſimilating and explaining another, with aſtoniſhing rapidity. I do not now allude to that quick perception of truth, which is ſo intuitive that it baffles reſearch, and makes us at a loſs to determine whether it is reminiſcence or ratiocination, loſt ſight of in its celerity, that opens the dark cloud. Over thoſe inſtantaneous aſſociations we have little power; for when the mind is once enlarged by excurſive flights, or profound reflection, the raw materials will, in ſome degree, arrange themſelves. The underſtanding, it is true, may keep us from going out of drawing when we group our thoughts, or tranſcribe from the imagination the warm ſketches of fancy; but the animal ſpirits, the individual character, give the colouring. Over this ſubtile electric fluid *, how little

power do we poſſeſs, and over it how little power can reaſon obtain! Theſe fine intractable ſpirits appear to be the eſſence of genius, and beaming in its eagle eye, produce in the moſt eminent degree the happy energy of aſſociating thoughts that ſurpriſe, delight, and inſtruct. Theſe are the glowing minds that concentrate pictures for their fellow-creatures; forcing them to view with intereſt the objects reflected from the impaſſioned imagination, which they paſſed over in nature.

I muſt be allowed to explain myſelf. The generality of people cannot ſee or feel poetically, they want fancy, and therefore fly from ſolitude in ſearch of ſenſible objects; but when an author lends them his eyes they can ſee as he ſaw, and be amuſed by images they could not ſelect, though lying before them.

Education thus only ſupplies the man of genius with knowledge to give variety and

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* I have ſometimes, when inclined to laugh at materialiſts, aſked whether, as the moſt powerful effects in nature are apparently produced by fluids, the magnetic, &c. the paſſions might not be fine volatile fluids that embraced humanity, keeping the more refractory elementary parts together—or whether they were ſimply a liquid fire that pervaded the more ſluggiſh materials, giving them life and heat?

contraſt to his aſſociations; but there is an habitual aſſociation of ideas, that grows ‘with our growth,’ which has a great effect on the moral character of mankind; and by which a turn is given to the mind that commonly remains throughout life. So ductile is the underſtanding, and yet ſo ſtubborn, that the aſſociations which depend on adventitious circumſtances, during the period that the body takes to arrive at maturity, can ſeldom be diſentangled by reaſon. One idea calls up another, its old aſſociate, and memory, faithful to the firſt impreſſions, particularly when the intellectual powers are not employed to cool our ſenſations, retraces them with mechanical exactneſs.

This habitual ſlavery, to firſt impreſſions, has a more baneful effect on the female than the male character, becauſe buſineſs and other dry employments of the underſtanding, tend to deaden the feelings and break aſſociations that do violence to reaſon. But females, who are made women of when they are mere children, and brought back to childhood when they ought to leave the go-cart for ever, have not ſufficient ſtrength of mind to efface

the ſuperinductions of art that have ſmothered nature.

Every thing that they ſee or hear ſerves to fix impreſſions, call forth emotions, and aſſociate ideas, that give a ſexual character to the mind. Falſe notions of beauty and delicacy ſtop the growth of their limbs and produce a ſickly ſoreneſs, rather than delicacy of organs; and thus weakened by being employed in unfolding inſtead of examining the firſt aſſociations, forced on them by every ſurrounding object, how can they attain the vigour neceſſary to enable them to throw off their factitious character?—where find ſtrength to recur to reaſon and riſe ſuperiour to a ſyſtem of oppreſſion, that blaſts the fair promiſes of ſpring? This cruel aſſociation of ideas, which every thing conſpires to twiſt into all their habits of thinking, or, to ſpeak with more preciſion, of feeling, receives new force when they begin to act a little for themſelves; for they then perceive that it is only through their addreſs to excite emotions in men, that pleaſure and power are to be obtained. Beſides, all the books profeſſedly written for their inſtruction, which make the firſt impreſſion on their minds, all inculcate the ſame opinions. Educated then in worſe than Egyptian bondage, it is unreaſonable, as well as cruel, to upbraid them with faults that can ſcarcely be avoided, unleſs a degree of native vigour be ſuppoſed, that falls to the lot of very few amongſt mankind.

For inſtance, the ſevereſt ſarcaſms have been levelled againſt the ſex, and they have been ridiculed for repeating ‘ a ſet of phraſes learnt by rote,’ when nothing could be more natural, conſidering the education they receive, and that their ‘ higheſt praiſe is to ‘ obey, unargued’—the will of man. If they are not allowed to have reaſon ſufficient to govern their own conduct—why, all they learn—muſt be learned by rote! And when all their ingenuity is called forth to adjuſt their dreſs, ‘ a paſſion for a ſcarlet coat,’ is ſo natural, that it never ſurpriſed me; and, allowing Pope's ſummary of their character to be juſt, ‘ that every woman is at heart a ‘ rake,’ why ſhould they be bitterly cenſured for ſeeking a congenial mind, and preferring a rake to a man of ſenſe?

Rakes know how to work on their ſenſibility, whilſt the modeſt merit of reaſonable men has, of courſe, leſs effect on their feel-

ings,

ings, and they cannot reach the heart by the way of the underſtanding, becauſe they have few ſentiments in common.

It ſeems a little abſurd to expect women to be more reaſonable than men in their *likings*, and ſtill to deny them the uncontrouled uſe of reaſon. When do men *fall-in-love* with ſenſe? When do they, with their ſuperiour powers and advantages, turn from the perſon to the mind? And how can they then expect women, who are only taught to obſerve behaviour, and acquire manners rather than morals, to deſpiſe what they have been all their lives labouring to attain? Where are they ſuddenly to find judgment enough to weigh patiently the ſenſe of an awkward virtuous man, when his manners, of which they are made critical judges, are rebuffing, and his converſation cold and dull, becauſe it does not conſiſt of pretty repartees, or well turned compliments? In order to admire or eſteem any thing for a continuance, we muſt, at leaſt, have our curioſity excited by knowing, in ſome degree, what we admire; for we are unable to eſtimate the value of qualities and virtues above our comprehenſion. Such a reſpect, when it is felt, may be very ſublime; and the confuſed conſciouſneſs of humility may render the dependent creature an intereſting object, in ſome points of view; but human love muſt have groſſer ingredients; and the perſon very naturally will come in for its ſhare—and, an ample ſhare it moſtly has!

Love is, in a great degree, an arbitrary paſſion, and will reign, like ſome other ſtalking miſchiefs, by its own authority, without deigning to reaſon; and it may alſo be eaſily diſtinguiſhed from eſteem, the foundation of friendſhip, becauſe it is often excited by evaneſcent beauties and graces, though to give an energy to the ſentiment, ſomething more ſolid muſt deepen their impreſſion and ſet the imagination to work, to make the moſt fair—the firſt good.

Common paſſions are excited by common qualities.—Men look for beauty and the ſimper of good-humoured docility: women are captivated by eaſy manners; a gentleman-like man ſeldom fails to pleaſe them, and their thirſty ears eagerly drink the inſinuating nothings of politeneſs, whilſt they turn from the unintelligible ſounds of the charmer—reaſon, charm he never ſo wiſely. With reſpect to ſuperficial accompliſhments, the rake certainly has the advantage; and of theſe females can form an opinion, for it is their own ground. Rendered gay and giddy by the whole tenor of their lives, the very aſpect of wiſdom, or the ſevere graces of virtue, muſt have a lugubrious appearance to them; and produce a kind of reſtraint from which they and love, ſportive child, naturally revolt. Without taſte, excepting of the lighter kind, for taſte is the offſpring of judgment, how can they diſcover that true beauty and grace muſt ariſe from the play of the mind? and how can they be expected to reliſh in a lover what they do not, or very imperfectly, poſſeſs themſelves? The ſympathy that unites hearts, and invites to confidence, in them is ſo very faint, that it cannot take fire, and thus mount to paſſion. No, I repeat it, the love cheriſhed by ſuch minds, muſt have groſſer fewel!

The inference is obvious; till women are led to exerciſe their underſtandings, they ſhould not be ſatirized for their attachment to rakes; nor even for being rakes at heart, when it appears to be the inevitable conſequence of their education. They who live to pleaſe—muſt find their enjoyments, their happineſs, in pleaſure! It is a trite, yet true remark, that we never do any thing well, unleſs we love it for its own ſake.

Suppoſing, however, for a moment, that women were, in ſome future revolution of time, to become, what I ſincerely wiſh them to be, even love would acquire more ſerious dignity, and be purified in its own fires; and virtue giving true delicacy to their affections, they would turn with diſguſt from a rake. Reaſoning then, as well as feeling, the only province of woman, at preſent, they might eaſily guard againſt exteriour graces, and quickly learn to deſpiſe the ſenſibility that had been excited and hackneyed in the ways of women, whoſe trade was vice; and allurements, wanton airs. They would recollect that the flame, one muſt uſe appropriated expreſſions, which they wiſhed to light up, had been exhauſted by luſt, and that the ſated appetite loſing all reliſh for pure and ſimple pleaſures, could only be rouſed by licentious arts or variety. What ſatisfaction could a woman of delicacy promiſe herſelf in a union with ſuch a man, when the very artleſſneſs of her affection

might appear inſipid? Thus does Dryden deſcribe the ſituation,

———‘ Where love is duty, on the female ſide,
‘ On theirs mere ſenſual guſt, and ſought with ſurly pride.’

But one grand truth women have yet to learn, though much it imports them to act accordingly. In the choice of a huſband, they ſhould not be led aſtray by the qualities of a lover—for a lover the huſband, even ſuppoſing him to be wiſe and virtuous, cannot long remain.

Were women more rationally educated, could they take a more comprehenſive view of things, they would be contented to love but once in their lives; and after marriage calmly let paſſion ſubſide into friendſhip—into that tender intimacy, which is the beſt refuge from care; yet is built on ſuch pure, ſtill affections, that idle jealouſies would not be allowed to diſturb the diſcharge of the ſober duties of life, nor to engroſs the thoughts that ought to be otherwiſe employed. This is a ſtate in which many men live; but few, very few women. And the difference may eaſily be accounted for, without recurring to a ſexual character. Men, for whom we are told women

men were made, have too much occupied the thoughts of women; and this aſſociation has ſo entangled love with all their motives of action; and, to harp a little on an old ſtring, having been ſolely employed either to prepare themſelves to excite love, or actually putting their leſſons in practice, they cannot live without love. But, when a ſenſe of duty, or fear of ſhame, obliges them to reſtrain this pampered deſire of pleaſing beyond certain lengths, too far for delicacy, it is true, though far from criminality, they obſtinately determine to love, I ſpeak of the paſſion, their huſbands to the end of the chapter—and then acting the part which they fooliſhly exacted from their lovers, they become abject woers, and fond ſlaves.

Men of wit and fancy are often rakes; and fancy is the food of love. Such men will inſpire paſſion. Half the ſex, in its preſent infantine ſtate, would pine for a Lovelace; a man ſo witty, ſo graceful, and ſo valiant: and can they *deſerve* blame for acting according to principles ſo conſtantly inculcated? They want a lover, and protector; and, behold him kneeling before them—bravery proſtrate to beauty! The virtues of a huſ-

band

band are thus thrown by love into the back ground, and gay hopes, or lively emotions, baniſh reflection till the day of reckoning comes; and come it ſurely will, to turn the ſprightly lover into a ſurly ſuſpicious tyrant, who contemptuouſly inſults the very weakneſs he foſtered. Or, ſuppoſing the rake reformed, he cannot quickly get rid of old habits. When a man of abilities is firſt carried away by his paſſions, it is neceſſary that ſentiment and taſte varniſh the enormities of vice, and give a zeſt to brutal indulgences; but when the gloſs of novelty is worn off, and pleaſure palls upon the ſenſe, laſciviouſneſs becomes barefaced, and enjoyment only the deſperate effort of weakneſs flying from reflexion as from a legion of devils. Oh! virtue thou art not an empty name! All that life can give—thou giveſt!

If much comfort cannot be expected from the friendſhip of a reformed rake of ſuperiour abilities, what is the conſequence when he lacketh ſenſe, as well as principles? Verily miſery, in its moſt hideous ſhape. When the habits of weak people are conſolidated by time, a reformation is barely poſſible; and actually makes the beings miſerable who have not ſufficient mind to be amuſed by innocent pleaſure; like the tradeſman who retires from the hurry of buſineſs, nature preſents to them only a univerſal blank; and the reſtleſs thoughts prey on the damped ſpirits*. Their reformation, as well as his retirement, actually makes them wretched becauſe it deprives them of all employment, by quenching the hopes and fears that ſet in motion their ſluggiſh minds.

If ſuch is the force of habit; if ſuch is the bondage of folly, how carefully ought we to guard the mind from ſtoring up vicious aſſociations; and equally careful ſhould we be to cultivate the underſtanding, to ſave the poor wight from the weak dependent ſtate of even harmleſs ignorance. For it is the right uſe of reaſon alone which makes us independent of every thing—excepting the unclouded Reaſon —'Whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom.'

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[*] I have frequently ſeen this exemplified in women, whoſe beauty could no longer be repaired. They have retired from the noiſy ſcenes of diſſipation; but, unleſs they became methodiſts, the ſolitude of the ſelect ſociety of their family connexions or acquaintance, has preſented only a fearful void; conſequently, nervous complaints, and all the vapouriſh train of idleneſs, rendered them quite as uſeleſs, and far more unhappy, than when they joined the giddy throng.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VII.

### MODESTY.—COMPREHENSIVELY CONSIDERED, AND NOT AS A SEXUAL VIRTUE.

MODESTY! Sacred offspring of ſenſibility and reaſon!—true delicacy of mind!—may I unblamed preſume to inveſtigate thy nature, and trace to its covert the mild charm, that mellowing each harſh feature of a character, renders what would otherwiſe only inſpire cold admiration—lovely!—Thou that ſmootheſt the wrinkles of wiſdom, and ſofteneſt the tone of the ſublimeſt virtues till they all melt into humanity;—thou that ſpreadeſt the ethereal cloud that ſurrounding love heightens every beauty, it half ſhades, breathing thoſe coy ſweets that ſteal into the heart, and charm the ſenſes—modulate for me the language of perſuaſive reaſon, till I rouſe my ſex from the flowery bed, on which they ſupinely ſleep life away!

In ſpeaking of the aſſociation of our ideas, I have noticed two diſtinct modes; and in defining modeſty, it appears to me equally proper to diſcriminate that purity of mind, which is the effect of chaſtity, from a ſimplicity of character that leads us to form a juſt opinion of ourſelves, equally diſtant from vanity or preſumption, though by no means incompatible with a lofty conſciouſneſs of our own dignity. Modeſty, in the latter ſignification of the term, is, that ſoberneſs of mind which teaches a man not to think more highly of himſelf than he ought to think, and ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from humility, becauſe humility is a kind of ſelf-abaſement.

A modeſt man often conceives a great plan, and tenaciouſly adheres to it, conſcious of his own ſtrength, till ſucceſs gives it a ſanction that determines its character. Milton was not arrogant when he ſuffered a ſuggeſtion of judgment to eſcape him that proved a propheſy; nor was General Waſhington when he accepted of the command of the American forces. The latter has always been characterized as a modeſt man; but had he been merely humble, he would probably have ſhrunk back irreſolute, afraid of truſting to himſelf the direction of an enterpriſe, on which ſo much depended.

A modeſt man is ſteady, an humble man timid, and a vain one preſumptuous:—this is the judgment, which the obſervation of many characters, has led me to form. Jeſus Chriſt was modeſt, Moſes was humble, and Peter vain.

Thus, diſcriminating modeſty from humility in one caſe, I do not mean to confound it with baſhfulneſs in the other. Baſhfulneſs, in fact, is ſo diſtinct from modeſty, that the moſt baſhful laſs, or raw country lout, often becomes the moſt impudent; for their baſhfulneſs being merely the inſtinctive timidity of ignorance, cuſtom ſoon changes it into aſſurance *.

The ſhameleſs behaviour of the proſtitutes, who infeſt the ſtreets of this metropolis, raiſ-

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* ‘ Such is the country-maiden's fright,
‘ When firſt a red-coat is in ſight;
‘ Behind the door ſhe hides her face;
‘ Next time at diſtance eyes the lace:
‘ She now can all his terrors ſtand,
‘ Nor from his ſqueeze withdraws her hand.
‘ She plays familiar in his arms,
‘ And ev'ry ſoldier hath his charms;
‘ From tent to tent ſhe ſpreads her flame;
‘ For cuſtom conquers fear and ſhame.’

*Gay.*

ing alternate emotions of pity and diſguſt, may ſerve to illuſtrate this remark. They trample on virgin baſhfulneſs with a ſort of bravado, and glorying in their ſhame, become more audaciouſly lewd than men, however depraved, to whom this ſexual quality has not been gratuitouſly granted, ever appear to be. But theſe poor ignorant wretches never had any modeſty to loſe, when they conſigned themſelves to infamy; for modeſty is a virtue not a quality. No, they were only baſhful, ſhame-faced innocents; and loſing their innocence, their ſhame-facedneſs was rudely bruſhed off; a virtue would have left ſome veſtiges in the mind, had it been ſacrificed to paſſion, to make us reſpect the grand ruin.

Purity of mind, or that genuine delicacy, which is the only virtuous ſupport of chaſtity, is near akin to that refinement of humanity, which never reſides in any but cultivated minds. It is ſomething nobler than innocence; it is the delicacy of reflection, and not the coyneſs of ignorance. The reſerve of reaſon, which, like habitual cleanlineſs, is ſeldom ſeen in any great degree, unleſs the ſoul is active, may eaſily be diſtinguiſhed from uſtic ſhyneſs or wanton ſkittiſhneſs; and, ſo

far from being incompatible with knowledge, it is its faireſt fruit. What a groſs idea of modeſty had the writer of the following remark! 'The lady who aſked the queſtion 'whether women may be inſtructed in the 'modern ſyſtem of botany, conſiſtently with 'female delicacy?—was accuſed of ridiculous 'prudery: nevertheleſs, if ſhe had propoſed 'the queſtion to me, I ſhould certainly have 'anſwered—They cannot.' Thus is the fair book of knowledge to be ſhut with an everlaſting ſeal! On reading ſimilar paſſages I have reverentially lifted up my eyes and heart to Him who liveth for ever and ever, and ſaid, O my Father, haſt Thou by the very conſtitution of her nature forbid Thy child to ſeek Thee in the fair forms of truth? And, can her ſoul be ſullied by the knowledge that awfully calls her to Thee?

I have then philoſophically purſued theſe reflections till I inferred that thoſe women who have moſt improved their reaſon muſt have the moſt modeſty—though a dignified ſedateneſs of deportment may have ſucceeded the playful, bewitching baſhfulneſs of youth*.

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* Modeſty, is the graceful calm virtue of maturity; baſhfulneſs, the charm of vivacious youth.

And thus have I argued. To render chaſtity the virtue from which unſophiſticated modeſty will naturally flow, the attention ſhould be called away from employments which only exerciſe the ſenſibility; and the heart made to beat time to humanity, rather than to throb with love. The woman who has dedicated a conſiderable portion of her time to purſuits purely intellectual, and whoſe affections have been exerciſed by humane plans of uſefulneſs, muſt have more purity of mind, as a natural conſequence, than the ignorant beings whoſe time and thoughts have been occupied by gay pleaſures or ſchemes to conquer hearts [*]. The regulation

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[*] I have converſed, as man with man, with medical men, on anatomical ſubjects; and compared the proportions of the human body with artiſts—yet ſuch modeſty did I meet with, that I was never reminded by word or look of my ſex, of the abſurd rules which make modeſty a phariſaical cloak of weakneſs. And I am perſuaded that in the purſuit of knowledge women would never be inſulted by ſenſible men, and rarely by men of any deſcription, if they did not by mock modeſty remind them that they were women: actuated by the ſame ſpirit as the Portugueze ladies, who would think their charms inſulted, if, when left alone with a man, he did not, at leaſt, attempt to be groſsly

lation of the behaviour is not modeſty, though thoſe who ſtudy rules of decorum are, in general, termed modeſt women. Make the heart clean, let it expand and feel for all that is human, inſtead of being narrowed by ſelfiſh paſſions; and let the mind frequently contemplate ſubjects that exerciſe the underſtanding, without heating the imagination, and artleſs modeſty will give the finiſhing touches to the picture.

She who can diſcern the dawn of immortality, in the ſtreaks that ſhoot athwart the miſty night of ignorance, promiſing a clearer day, will reſpect, as a ſacred temple, the body that enſhrines ſuch an improvable ſoul. True love, likewiſe, ſpreads this kind of myſterious ſanctity round the beloved object, making the lover moſt modeſt when in her preſence [*]. So reſerved is affection that, receiving or returning perſonal endearments, it wiſhes, not only to ſhun the human eye, as a kind of profanation; but to diffuſe an

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familiar with their perſons. Men are not always men in the company of women, nor would women always remember that they are women, if they were allowed to acquire more underſtanding.

[*] Male or female; for the world contains many modeſt men.

encircling cloudy obſcurity to ſhut out even the ſaucy ſparkling ſunbeams. Yet, that affection does not deſerve the epithet of chaſte, which does not receive a ſublime gloom of tender melancholy, that allows the mind for a moment to ſtand ſtill and enjoy the preſent ſatisfaction, when a conſciouſneſs of the Divine preſence is felt—for this muſt ever be the food of joy!

As I have always been fond of tracing to its ſource in nature any prevailing cuſtom, I have frequently thought that it was a ſentiment of affection for whatever had touched the perſon of an abſent or loſt friend, which gave birth to that reſpect for relicks, ſo much abuſed by ſelfiſh prieſts. Devotion, or love, may be allowed to hallow the garments as well as the perſon; for the lover muſt want fancy who has not a ſort of ſacred reſpect for the glove or ſlipper of his miſtreſs. He could not confound them with vulgar things of the ſame kind. This fine ſentiment, perhaps, would not bear to be analyzed by the experimental philoſopher—but of ſuch ſtuff is human rapture made up!—A ſhadowy phantom glides before us, obſcuring every other object; yet when the ſoft cloud is graſped, the

the form melts into common air, leaving a ſolitary void, or ſweet perfume, ſtolen from the violet, that memory long holds dear. But, I have tripped unawares on fairy ground, feeling the balmy gale of ſpring ſtealing on me, though november frowns.

As a ſex, women are more chaſte than men, and as modeſty is the effect of chaſtity, they may deſerve to have this virtue aſcribed to them in rather an appropriated ſenſe; yet, I muſt be allowed to add an heſitating if:—for I doubt whether chaſtity will produce modeſty, though it may propriety of conduct, when it is merely a reſpect for the opinion of the world *, and when coquetry and the love-lorn tales of noveliſts employ the thoughts. Nay, from experience, and reaſon, I ſhould be led to expect to meet with more modeſty amongſt men than women, ſimply becauſe men exerciſe their underſtandings more than women.

But, with reſpect to propriety of behaviour, excepting one claſs of females, women have evidently the advantage. What can be

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* The immodeſt behaviour of many married women, who are neverthleſs faithful to their huſbands' beds, will illuſtrate this remark.

more diſguſting than that impudent droſs of gallantry, thought ſo manly, which makes many men ſtare inſultingly at every female they meet? Is this reſpect for the ſex? This looſe behaviour ſhews ſuch habitual depravity, ſuch weakneſs of mind, that it is vain to expect much public or private virtue, till both men and women grow more modeſt—till men, curbing a ſenſual fondneſs for the ſex, or an affectation of manly aſſurance, more properly ſpeaking, impudence, treat each other with reſpect—unleſs appetite or paſſion gives the tone, peculiar to it, to their behaviour. I mean even perſonal reſpect—the modeſt reſpect of humanity, and fellow-feeling—not the libidinous mockery of gallantry, nor the inſolent condeſcenſion of protectorſhip.

To carry the obſervation ſtill further, modeſty muſt heartily diſclaim, and refuſe to dwell with that debauchery of mind, which leads a man coolly to bring forward, without a bluſh, indecent alluſions, or obſcene witticiſms, in the preſence of a fellow creature; women are now out of the queſtion, for then it is brutality. Reſpect for man, as man, is the foundation of every noble ſentiment. How much more

modeſt is the libertine who obeys the call of appetite or fancy, than the lewd joker who ſets the table in a roar!

This is one of the many inſtances in which the ſexual diſtinction reſpecting modeſty has proved fatal to virtue and happineſs. It is, however, carried ſtill further, and woman, weak woman! made by her education the ſlave of ſenſibility, is required, on the moſt trying occaſions, to reſiſt that ſenſibility. 'Can any thing,' ſays Knox, 'be more abſurd than keeping women in a ſtate of ignorance, and yet ſo vehemently to inſiſt on their reſiſting temptation?'—Thus when virtue or honour make it proper to check a paſſion, the burden is thrown on the weaker ſhoulders, contrary to reaſon and true modeſty, which, at leaſt, ſhould render the ſelf-denial mutual, to ſay nothing of the generoſity of bravery, ſuppoſed to be a manly virtue.

In the ſame ſtrain runs Rouſſeau's and Dr. Gregory's advice reſpecting modeſty, ſtrangely miſcalled! for they both deſire a wife to leave it in doubt whether ſenſibility or weakneſs led her to her huſband's arms.—The woman is immodeſt who can let the ſhadow of ſuch a doubt remain on her huſband's mind a moment.

But to ſtate the ſubject in a different light,—The want of modeſty, which I principally deplore as ſubverſive of morality, ariſes from the ſtate of warfare ſo ſtrenuouſly ſupported by voluptuous men as the very eſſence of modeſty, though, in fact, its bane; becauſe it is a refinement on luſt, that men fall into who have not ſufficient virtue to reliſh the innocent pleaſures of love. A man of delicacy carries his notions of modeſty ſtill further, for neither weakneſs nor ſenſibility will gratify him—he looks for affection.

Again; men boaſt of their triumphs over women, what do they boaſt of? Truly the creature of ſenſibility was ſurpriſed by her ſenſibility into folly—into vice*; and the dreadful reckoning falls heavily on her own weak head, when reaſon wakes. For where art thou to find comfort, forlorn and diſconſolate one? He who ought to have directed thy reaſon, and ſupported thy weakneſs, has betrayed thee! In a dream of paſſion thou conſentedſt to wander through flowery lawns,

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* The poor moth fluttering round a candle, burns its wings.

and heedleſsly ſtepping over the precipice to which thy guide, inſtead of guarding, lured thee, thou ſtarteſt from thy dream only to face a ſneering, frowning world, and to find thyſelf alone in a waſte, for he that triumphed in thy weakneſs is now purſuing new conqueſts; but for thee—there is no redemption on this ſide the grave!—And what reſource has thou in an enervated mind to raiſe a ſinking heart?

But, if the ſexes are really to live in a ſtate of warfare, if nature has pointed it out, let men act nobly, or let pride whiſper to them, that the victory is mean when they merely vanquiſh ſenſibility. The real conqueſt is that over affection not taken by ſurpriſe—when, like Heloiſa, a woman gives up all the world, deliberately, for love. I do not now conſider the wiſdom or virtue of ſuch a ſacrifice, I only contend that it was a ſacrifice to affection, and not merely to ſenſibility, though ſhe had her ſhare.—And I muſt be allowed to call her a modeſt woman, before I diſmiſs this part of the ſubject, by ſaying, that till men are more chaſte women will be immodeſt. Where, indeed, could modeſt women find huſbands from whom they would not continually turn with diſguſt? Modeſty muſt be equally cultivated by both ſexes, or it will ever remain a ſickly hot-houſe plant, whilſt the affectation of it, the fig leaf borrowed by wantonneſs, may give a zeſt to voluptuous enjoyments.

Men will probably ſtill inſiſt that woman ought to have more modeſty than man; but it is not diſpaſſionate reaſoners who will moſt earneſtly oppoſe my opinion. No, they are the men of fancy, the favourites of the ſex, who outwardly reſpect and inwardly deſpiſe the weak creatures whom they thus ſport with. They cannot ſubmit to reſign the higheſt ſenſual gratification, nor even to reliſh the epicuriſm of virtue—ſelf-denial.

To take another view of the ſubject, confining my remarks to women.

The ridiculous falſities[*] which are told to children, from miſtaken notions of modeſty, tend very early to inflame their imaginations and ſet their little minds to work, reſpecting ſubjects, which nature never intended they ſhould think of till the body arrived at ſome degree of maturity; then the paſſions naturally begin to take place of the ſenſes, as inſtruments to unfold the underſtanding, and form the moral character.

In nurſeries, and boarding-ſchools, I fear, girls are firſt ſpoiled; particularly in the latter. A number of girls ſleep in the ſame room, and waſh together. And, though I ſhould be ſorry to contaminate an innocent creature's mind by inſtilling falſe delicacy, or thoſe indecent prudiſh notions, which early cautions reſpecting the other ſex naturally engender, I ſhould be very anxious to prevent their acquiring naſty, or immodeſt habits; and as many girls have learned very naſty tricks, from ignorant ſervants, the mixing them thus indiſcriminately together, is very improper.

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[*] Children very early ſee cats with their kittens, birds with their young ones, &c. Why then are they not to be told that their mothers carry and nouriſh them in the ſame way? As there would then be no appearance of myſtery they would never think of the ſubject more. Truth may always be told to children, if it be told gravely; but it is the immodeſty of affected modeſty, that does all the miſchief; and this ſmoke heats the imagination by vainly endeavouring to obſcure certain objects. If, indeed, children could be kept entirely from improper company, we ſhould never allude to any ſuch ſubjects; but as this is impoſſible, it is beſt to tell them the truth, eſpecially as ſuch information, not intereſting them, will make no impreſſion on their imagination.

To ſay the truth women are, in general, too familiar with each other, which leads to that groſs degree of familiarity that ſo frequently renders the marriage ſtate unhappy. Why in the name of decency are ſiſters, female intimates, or ladies and their waiting-women, to be ſo groſsly familiar as to forget the reſpect which one human creature owes to another? That ſqueamiſh delicacy which ſhrinks from the moſt diſguſting offices when affection * or humanity lead us to watch at a ſick pillow, is deſpicable. But, why women in health ſhould be more familiar with each other than men are, when they boaſt of their ſuperiour delicacy, is a ſoleciſm in manners which I could never ſolve.

In order to preſerve health and beauty, I ſhould earneſtly recommend frequent ablutions, to dignify my advice that it may not offend the faſtidious ear; and, by example, girls ought to be taught to waſh and dreſs alone,

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* Affection would rather make one chooſe to perform theſe offices, to ſpare the delicacy of a friend, by ſtill keeping a veil over them, for the perſonal helpleſſneſs, produced by ſickneſs, is of an humbling nature.

without any diſtinction of rank; and if cuſtom ſhould make them require ſome little aſſiſtance, let them not require it till that part of the buſineſs is over which ought never to be done before a fellow-creature; becauſe it is an inſult to the majeſty of human nature. Not on the ſcore of modeſty, but decency; for the care which ſome modeſt women take, making at the ſame time a diſplay of that care, not to let their legs be ſeen, is as childiſh as immodeſt *.

I could proceed ſtill further, till I animadverted on ſome ſtill more naſty cuſtoms, which men never fall into. Secrets are told —where ſilence ought to reign; and that regard to cleanlineſs, which ſome religious ſects have, perhaps, carried too far, eſpecially the Eſſenes, amongſt the Jews, by making that an inſult to God which is only an inſult to humanity, is violated in a beaſtly manner. How can *delicate* women obtrude on notice that part of the animal œconomy, which is ſo very diſguſting? And is it not very rational to conclude, that the women who have not been taught to reſpect the human nature of their own ſex, in theſe particulars, will not long reſpect the mere difference of ſex in their huſbands? After their maideniſh baſhfulneſs is once loſt, I, in fact, have generally obſerved, that women fall into old habits; and treat their huſbands as they did their ſiſters or female acquaintance.

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* I remember to have met with a ſentence, in a book of education, that made me ſmile. ‘ It would be needleſs to caution you againſt putting your hand, by chance, under your neck-handkerchief; for a modeſt woman never did ſo!’

Beſides, women from neceſſity, becauſe their minds are not cultivated, have recourſe very often to what I familiarly term bodily wit; and their intimacies are of the ſame kind. In ſhort, with reſpect to both mind and body, they are too intimate. That decent perſonal reſerve which is the foundation of dignity of character, muſt be kept up between women, or their minds will never gain ſtrength or modeſty.

On this account alſo, I object to many females being ſhut up together in nurſeries, ſchools, or convents. I cannot recollect without indignation, the jokes and hoiden tricks, which knots of young women indulge themſelves in, when in my youth accident threw me, an awkward ruſtic, in their way. They

were almoſt on a par with the double meanings, which ſhake the convivial table when the glaſs has circulated freely. But, it is vain to attempt to keep the heart pure, unleſs the head is furniſhed with ideas, and ſet to work to compare them, in order to acquire judgment, by generalizing ſimple ones; and modeſty, by making the underſtanding damp the ſenſibility.

It may be thought that I lay too great a ſtreſs on perſonal reſerve; but it is ever the handmaid of modeſty. So that were I to name the graces that ought to adorn beauty, I ſhould inſtantly exclaim, cleanlineſs, neatneſs, and perſonal reſerve. It is obvious, I ſuppoſe, that the reſerve I mean, has nothing ſexual in it, and that I think it *equally* neceſſary in both ſexes. So neceſſary, indeed, is that reſerve and cleanlineſs which indolent women too often neglect, that I will venture to affirm that when two or three women live in the ſame houſe, the one will be moſt reſpected by the male part of the family, who reſide with them, leaving love entirely out of the queſtion, who pays this kind of habitual reſpect to her perſon.

When domeſtic friends meet in a morning, there will naturally prevail an affectionate ſeriouſneſs, eſpecially, if each look forward to the diſcharge of daily duties; and, it may be reckoned fanciful, but this ſentiment has frequently roſe ſpontaneouſly in my mind, I have been pleaſed after breathing the ſweet-bracing morning air, to ſee the ſame kind of freſhneſs in the countenances I particularly loved; I was glad to ſee them braced, as it were, for the day, and ready to run their courſe with the ſun. The greetings of affection in the morning are by theſe means more reſpectful than the familiar tenderneſs which frequently prolongs the evening talk. Nay, I have often felt hurt, not to ſay diſguſted, when a friend has appeared, whom I parted with full dreſſed the evening before, with her clothes huddled on, becauſe ſhe choſe to indulge herſelf in bed till the laſt moment.

Domeſtic affection can only be kept alive by theſe neglected attentions; yet if men and women took half as much pains to dreſs habitually neat, as they do to ornament, or rather to disfigure, their perſons, much would be done towards the attainment of purity of mind. But women only dreſs to gratify men

of gallantry; for the lover is always beſt pleaſed with the ſimple garb that ſits cloſe to the ſhape. There is an impertinence in ornaments that rebuffs affection; becauſe love always clings round the idea of home.

As a ſex, women are habitually indolent; and every thing tends to make them ſo. I do not forget the ſpurts of activity which ſenſibility produces; but as theſe flights of feelings only increaſe the evil, they are not to be confounded with the ſlow, orderly walk of reaſon. So great in reality is their mental and bodily indolence, that till their body be ſtrengthened and their underſtanding enlarged by active exertions, there is little reaſon to expect that modeſty will take place of baſhfulneſs. They may find it prudent to aſſume its ſemblance; but the fair veil will only be worn on gala days.

Perhaps, there is not a virtue that mixes ſo kindly with every other as modeſty.— It is the pale moon-beam that renders more intereſting every virtue it ſoftens, giving mild grandeur to the contracted horizon. Nothing can be more beautiful than the poetical fiction, which makes Diana with her ſilver creſcent, the goddeſs of chaſtity.

I have ſometimes thought, that wandering with ſedate ſtep in ſome lonely receſs, a modeſt dame of antiquity muſt have felt a glow of conſcious dignity when, after contemplating the ſoft ſhadowy landſcape, ſhe has invited with placid fervour the mild reflection of her ſiſters beams to turn to her chaſte boſom.

A Chriſtian has ſtill nobler motives to incite her to preſerve her chaſtity and acquire modeſty, for her body has been called the Temple of the living God; of that God who requires more than modeſty of mein. His eye ſearcheth the heart; and let her remember, that if ſhe hopeth to find favour in the ſight of purity itſelf, her chaſtity muſt be founded on modeſty and not on worldly prudence; or verily a good reputation will be her only reward; for that awful intercourſe, that ſacred communication, which virtue eſtabliſhes between man and his Maker, muſt give riſe to the wiſh of being pure as he is pure!

After the foregoing remarks, it is almoſt ſuperfluous to add, that I conſider all thoſe feminine airs of maturity, which ſucceed baſhfulneſs, to which truth is ſacrificed, to ſecure the heart of a huſband, or rather to force him to be ſtill a lover when nature would, had ſhe not been interrupted in her operations, have made love give place to friendſhip, as immodeſt. The tenderneſs which a man will feel for the mother of his children is an excellent ſubſtitute for the ardour of unſatisfied paſſion; but to prolong that ardour it is indelicate, not to ſay immodeſt, for women to feign an unnatural coldneſs of conſtitution. Women as well as men ought to have the common appetites and paſſions of their nature, they are only brutal when unchecked by reaſon: but the obligation to check them is the duty of mankind, not a ſexual duty. Nature, in theſe reſpects, may ſafely be left to herſelf; let women only acquire knowledge and humanity, and love will teach them modeſty [*]. There is no need of falſehoods, diſguſting as futile, for ſtudied rules of behaviour only impoſe on ſhallow obſervers; a man of ſenſe ſoon ſees through, and deſpiſes the affectation.

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[*] The behaviour of many newly married women has often diſguſted me. They ſeem anxious never to let their huſbands forget the privilege of marriage; and to find no pleaſure in his ſociety unleſs he is acting the lover. Short, indeed, muſt be the reign of love, when the flame is thus conſtantly blown up, without its receiving any ſolid fewel!

The behaviour of young people, to each other, as men and women, is the laſt thing that ſhould be thought of in education. In fact, behaviour in moſt circumſtances is now ſo much thought of, that ſimplicity of character is rarely to be ſeen: yet, if men were only anxious to cultivate each virtue, and let it take root firmly in the mind, the grace reſulting from it, its natural exteriour mark, would ſoon ſtrip affectation of its flaunting plumes; becauſe, fallacious as unſtable, is the conduct that is not founded upon truth!

Would ye, O my ſiſters, really poſſeſs modeſty, ye muſt remember that the poſſeſſion of virtue, of any denomination, is incompatible with ignorance and vanity! ye muſt acquire that ſoberneſs of mind, which the exerciſe of duties, and the purſuit of knowledge, alone inſpire, or ye will ſtill remain in a doubtful dependent ſituation, and only be loved whilſt ye are fair! The downcaſt eye, the roſy bluſh, the retiring grace, are all proper in their ſeaſon; but modeſty, being the child of reaſon, cannot long exiſt with the ſenſibility that is not tempered by reflection. Beſides, when

when love, even innocent love, is the whole employ of your lives, your hearts will be too ſoft to afford modeſty that tranquil retreat, where ſhe delights to dwell, in cloſe union with humanity.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

### MORALITY UNDERMINED BY SEXUAL NOTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD REPUTATION.

It has long ſince occurred to me that advice reſpecting behaviour, and all the various modes of preſerving a good reputation, which have been ſo ſtrenuouſly inculcated on the female world, were ſpecious poiſons, that incruſting morality eat away the ſubſtance. And, that this meaſuring of ſhadows produced a falſe calculation, becauſe their length depends ſo much on the height of the ſun, and other adventitious circumſtances.

From whence ariſes the eaſy fallacious behaviour of a courtier? From his ſituation, undoubtedly: for ſtanding in need of dependents, he is obliged to learn the art of denying without giving offence, and, of evaſively feeding hope with the chameleon's food: thus does politeneſs ſport with truth, and

eating away the ſincerity and humanity natural to man, produce the fine gentleman.

Women in the ſame way acquire, from a ſuppoſed neceſſity, an equally artificial mode of behaviour. Yet truth is not with impunity to be ſported with, for the practiſed diſſembler, at laſt, become the dupe of his own arts, loſes that ſagacity, which has been juſtly termed common ſenſe; namely, a quick perception of common truths: which are conſtantly received as ſuch by the unſophiſticated mind, though it might not have had ſufficient energy to diſcover them itſelf, when obſcured by local prejudices. The greater number of people take their opinions on truſt to avoid the trouble of exerciſing their own minds, and theſe indolent beings naturally adhere to the letter, rather than the ſpirit of a law, divine or human. ‘ Women,’ ſays ſome author, I cannot recollect who, ‘ mind ‘ not what only heaven ſees.’ Why, indeed ſhould they? it is the eye of man that they have been taught to dread—and if they can lull their Argus to ſleep, they ſeldom think of heaven or themſelves, becauſe their reputation is ſafe; and it is reputation, not chaſtity and all its fair train, that they are employed to keep free from ſpot, not as a virtue, but to preſerve their ſtation in the world.

To prove the truth of this remark, I need only advert to the intrigues of married women, particularly in high life, and in countries where women are ſuitably married, according to their reſpective ranks, by their parents. If an innocent girl become a prey to love, ſhe is degraded for ever, though her mind was not polluted by the arts which married women, under the convenient cloke of marriage, practiſe; nor has ſhe violated any duty—but the duty of reſpecting herſelf. The married woman, on the contrary, breaks a moſt ſacred engagement, and becomes a cruel mother when ſhe is a falſe and faithleſs wife. If her huſband has ſtill an affection for her, the arts which ſhe muſt practiſe to deceive him, will render her the moſt contemptible of human beings; and, at any rate, the contrivances neceſſary to preſerve appearances, will keep her mind in that childiſh, or vicious, tumult, which deſtroys all its energy. Beſides, in time, like thoſe people who habitually take cordials to raiſe their ſpirits, ſhe will want an intrigue to give life to her thoughts, having loſt all reliſh for

pleaſures that are not highly ſeaſoned by hope or fear.

Sometimes married women act ſtill more audaciouſly; I will mention an inſtance.

A woman of quality, notorious for her gallantries, though as ſhe ſtill lived with her huſband, nobody choſe to place her in the claſs where ſhe ought to have been placed, made a point of treating with the moſt inſulting contempt a poor timid creature, abaſhed by a ſenſe of her former weakneſs, whom a neighbouring gentleman had ſeduced and afterwards married. This woman had actually confounded virtue with reputation; and, I do believe, valued herſelf on the propriety of her behaviour before marriage, though when once ſettled, to the ſatisfaction of her family, ſhe and her lord were equally faithleſs,—ſo that the half alive heir to an immenſe eſtate, came from heaven knows where!

To view this ſubject in another light.

I have known a number of women who, if they did not love their huſbands, loved nobody elſe, give themſelves entirely up to vanity and diſſipation, neglecting every domeſtic duty; nay, even ſquandering away all the money which ſhould have been ſaved for their helpleſs younger children, yet have plumed themſelves on their unſullied reputation, as if the whole compaſs of their duty as wives and mothers was only to preſerve it. Whilſt other indolent women neglecting every perſonal duty, have thought that they deſerved their huſbands' affection, becauſe they acted in this reſpect with propriety.

Weak minds are always fond of reſting in the ceremonials of duty, but morality offers much ſimpler motives; and it were to be wiſhed that ſuperficial moraliſts had ſaid leſs reſpecting behaviour, and outward obſervances, for unleſs virtue, of any kind, is built on knowledge, it will only produce a kind of inſipid decency. Reſpect for the opinion of the world, has, however, been termed the principal duty of woman in the moſt expreſs words, for Rouſſeau declares, ‘ that reputation ‘ is no leſs indiſpenſable than chaſtity.' ‘ A man,' adds he, ‘ ſecure in his own good ‘ conduct, depends only on himſelf, and ‘ may brave the public opinion; but a woman, ‘ in behaving well, performs but half ‘ her duty; as what is thought of her, is as ‘ important to her as what ſhe really is. It ‘ follows hence, that the ſyſtem of a woman's

‘ education ſhould, in this reſpect, be ‘ directly contrary to that of ours. Opinion ‘ is the grave of virtue among the men; but ‘ its throne among women.' It is ſtrictly logical to infer that the virtue that reſts on opinion is merely worldly, and that it is the virtue of a being to whom reaſon has been denied. But, even with reſpect to the opinion of the world, I am convinced that this claſs of reaſoners are miſtaken.

This regard for reputation, independent of its being one of the natural rewards of virtue, however, took its riſe from a cauſe that I have already deplored as the grand ſource of female depravity, the impoſſibility of regaining reſpectability by a return to virtue, though men preſerve theirs during the indulgence of vice. It was natural for women then to endeavour to preſerve what once loſt—was loſt for ever, till this care ſwallowing up every other care, reputation for chaſtity, became the one thing needful to the ſex. But vain is the ſcrupuloſity of ignorance, for neither religion nor virtue, when they reſide in the heart, require ſuch a puerile attention to mere ceremonies, becauſe the behaviour muſt, upon the whole, be proper, when the motive is pure.

To ſupport my opinion I can produce very reſpectable authority; and the authority of a cool reaſoner ought to have weight to enforce conſideration, though not to eſtabliſh a ſentiment. Speaking of the general laws of morality, Dr. Smith obſerves,—‘ That by ſome ‘ very extraordinary and unlucky circum‘ ſtance, a good man may come to be ſuſ‘ pected of a crime of which he was altogether ‘ incapable, and upon that account be moſt ‘ unjuſtly expoſed for the remaining part of ‘ his life to the horror and averſion of man‘ kind. By an accident of this kind he may ‘ be ſaid to loſe his all, notwithſtanding his ‘ integrity and juſtice, in the ſame manner ‘ as a cautious man, notwithſtanding his ‘ utmoſt circumſpection, may be ruined by ‘ an earthquake or an inundation. Accidents ‘ of the firſt kind, however, are perhaps ſtill ‘ more rare, and ſtill more contrary to the ‘ common courſe of things than thoſe of the ‘ ſecond; and it ſtill remains true, that the ‘ practice of truth, juſtice, and humanity, ‘ is a certain and almoſt infallible method of

‘ acquiring what thoſe virtues chiefly aim at, ‘ the confidence and love of thoſe we live ‘ with. A perſon may be eaſily miſrepre‘ ſented with regard to a particular action; ‘ but it is ſcarce poſſible that he ſhould be ſo ‘ with regard to the general tenor of his con‘ duct. An innocent man may be believed ‘ to have done wrong: this, however, will ‘ rarely happen. On the contrary, the eſta‘ bliſhed opinion of the innocence of his man‘ ners will often lead us to abſolve him ‘ where he has really been in the fault, not‘ withſtanding very ſtrong preſumptions.’

I perfectly coincide in opinion with this writer, for I verily believe that few of either ſex were ever deſpiſed for certain vices without deſerving to be deſpiſed. I ſpeak not of the calumny of the moment, which hangs over a character, like one of the denſe fogs of November, over this metropolis, till it gradually ſubſides before the common light of day, I only contend that the daily conduct of the majority prevails to ſtamp their character with the impreſſion of truth. Quietly does the clear light, ſhining day after day, refute the ignorant ſurmiſe, or malicious tale, which has thrown dirt on a pure character. A falſe light diſtorted, for a ſhort time, its ſhadow—reputation; but it ſeldom fails to become juſt when the cloud is diſperſed that produced the miſtake in viſion.

Many people, undoubtedly, in ſeveral reſpects obtain a better reputation than, ſtrictly ſpeaking, they deſerve; for unremitting induſtry will moſtly reach its goal in all races. They who only ſtrive for this paltry prize, like the Phariſees, who prayed at the corners of ſtreets, to be ſeen of men, verily obtain the reward they ſeek; for the heart of man cannot be read by man! Still the fair fame that is naturally reflected by good actions, when the man is only employed to direct his ſteps aright, regardleſs of the lookers-on, is, in general, not only more true, but more ſure.

There are, it is true, trials when the good man muſt appeal to God from the injuſtice of man; and amidſt the whining candour or hiſſings of envy, erect a pavilion in his own mind to retire to till the rumour be overpaſt; nay, the darts of undeſerved cenſure may pierce an innocent tender boſom through with many ſorrows; but theſe are all exceptions to general rules. And it is according to theſe common laws that human behaviour ought to be regulated. The eccentric orbit of the comet never influences aſtronomical calculations reſpecting the invariable order eſtabliſhed in the motion of the principal bodies of the ſolar ſyſtem.

I will then venture to affirm, that after a man is arrived at maturity, the general outline of his character in the world is juſt, allowing for the before-mentioned exceptions to the rule. I do not ſay that a prudent, worldly-wiſe man, with only negative virtues and qualities, may not ſometimes obtain a more ſmooth reputation than a wiſer or a better man. So far from it, that I am apt to conclude from experience, that where the virtue of two people is nearly equal, the moſt negative character will be liked beſt by the world at large, whilſt the other may have more friends in private life. But the hills and dales, clouds and ſunſhine, conſpicuous in the virtues of great men, ſet off each other; and though they afford envious weakneſs a fairer mark to ſhoot at, the real character will ſtill work its way to light, though beſpattered by weak affection, or ingenious malice [*].

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[*] I allude to various biographical writings, but particularly to Boſwell's Life of Johnſon.

With reſpect to that anxiety to preſerve a reputation hardly earned, which leads ſagacious people to analyze it, I ſhall not make the obvious comment; but I am afraid that morality is very inſidiouſly undermined, in the female world, by the attention being turned to the ſhew inſtead of the ſubſtance. A ſimple thing is thus made ſtrangely complicated; nay, ſometimes virtue and its ſhadow are ſet at variance. We ſhould never, perhaps, have heard of Lucretia, had ſhe died to preſerve her chaſtity inſtead of her reputation. If we really deſerve our own good opinion we ſhall commonly be reſpected in the world; but if we pant after higher improvement and higher attainments, it is not ſufficient to view ourſelves as we ſuppoſe that we are viewed by others, though this has been ingeniouſly argued, as the foundation of our moral ſentiments *. Becauſe each by-ſtander may have his own prejudices, beſide the prejudices of his age or country. We ſhould rather endeavour to view ourſelves as we ſuppoſe that Being views us who ſeeth each thought ripen into action, and whoſe judgment never ſwerves from the eternal rule of right. Righteous are all his judgments—juſt as merciful!

The humble mind that ſeeketh to find favour in His ſight, and calmly examines its conduct when only His preſence is felt, will ſeldom form a very erroneous opinion of its own virtues. During the ſtill hour of ſelf-collection the angry brow of offended juſtice will be fearfully deprecated, or the tie which draws man to the Deity will be recognized in the pure ſentiment of reverential adoration, that ſwells the heart without exciting any tumultuous emotions. In theſe ſolemn moments man diſcovers the germ of thoſe vices, which like the Java tree ſhed a peſtiferous vapour around—death is in the ſhade! and he perceives them without abhorrence, becauſe he feels himſelf drawn by ſome cord of love to all his fellow-creatures, for whoſe follies he is anxious to find every extenuation in their nature—in himſelf. If I, he may thus argue, who exerciſe my own mind, and have been refined by tribulation, find the ſerpent's egg in ſome fold of my heart, and cruſh it with difficulty, ſhall not I pity thoſe whoſe have ſtamped with leſs vigour, or who have heedleſsly nurtured the inſidious reptile till it poiſoned the vital ſtream it ſucked? Can I, conſcious

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* Smith.

conſcious of my ſecret ſins, throw off my fellow-creatures, and calmly ſee them drop into the chaſm of perdition, that yawns to receive them.—No! no! The agonized heart will cry with ſuffocating impatience—I too am a man! and have vices, hid, perhaps, from human eye, that bend me to the duſt before God, and loudly tell me, when all is mute, that we are formed of the ſame earth, and breathe the ſame element. Humanity thus riſes naturally out of humility, and twiſts the cords of love that in various convolutions entangle the heart.

This ſympathy extends ſtill further, till a man well pleaſed obſerves force in arguments that do not carry conviction to his own boſom, and he gladly places in the faireſt light, to himſelf, the ſhews of reaſon that have led others aſtray, rejoiced to find ſome reaſon in all the errors of man; though before convinced that he who rules the day makes his ſun to ſhine on all. Yet, ſhaking hands thus as it were with corruption, one foot on earth, the other with bold ſtride mounts to heaven, and claims kindred with ſuperiour natures. Virtues, unobſerved by man, drop their balmy fragrance at this cool hour, and the thirſty land, refreſhed by the pure ſtreams of comfort that ſuddenly guſh out, is crowned with ſmiling verdure; this is the living green, on which that eye may look with complacency that is too pure to behold iniquity!

But my ſpirits flag; and I muſt ſilently indulge the reverie theſe reflections lead to, unable to deſcribe the ſentiments, that have calmed my ſoul, when watching the riſing ſun, a ſoft ſhower drizzling through the leaves of neighbouring trees, ſeemed to fall on my languid, yet tranquil ſpirits, to cool the heart that had been heated by the paſſions which reaſon laboured to tame.

The leading principles which run through all my diſquiſitions, would render it unneceſſary to enlarge on this ſubject, if a conſtant attention to keep the varniſh of the character freſh, and in good condition, were not often inculcated as the ſum total of female duty; if rules to regulate the behaviour, and to preſerve the reputation, did not too frequently ſuperſede moral obligations. But, with reſpect to reputation, the attention is confined to a ſingle virtue—chaſtity. If the honour of a woman, as it is abſurdly called, is ſafe, ſhe may neglect every ſocial duty; nay, ruin her family by gaming and extravagance; yet ſtill preſent a ſhameleſs front—for truly ſhe is an honourable woman!

Mrs. Macaulay has juſtly obſerved, that ‘there is but one fault which a woman ‘of honour may not commit with impunity.’ She then juſtly, and humanely adds—‘This ‘has given riſe to the trite and fooliſh obſer‘vation, that the firſt fault againſt chaſtity ‘in woman has a radical power to deprave ‘the character. But no ſuch frail beings ‘come out of the hands of nature. The ‘human mind is built of nobler materials ‘than to be ſo eaſily corrupted; and with all ‘their diſadvantages of ſituation and educa‘tion, women ſeldom become entirely aban‘doned till they are thrown into a ſtate of ‘deſperation, by the venomous rancour of ‘their own ſex.’

But, in proportion as this regard for the reputation of chaſtity is prized by women, it is deſpiſed by men: and the two extremes are equally deſtructive to morality.

Men are certainly more under the influence of their appetites than women; and their appetites are more depraved by unbridled indulgence and the faſtidious contrivances of ſatiety.

Luxury has introduced a refinement in eating, that deſtroys the conſtitution; and, a degree of gluttony which is ſo beaſtly, that a perception of ſeemlineſs of behaviour muſt be worn out before one being could eat immoderately in the preſence of another, and afterwards complain of the oppreſſion that his intemperance naturally produced. Some women, particularly French women, have alſo loſt a ſenſe of decency in this reſpect; for they will talk very calmly of an indigeſtion. It were to be wiſhed that idleneſs was not allowed to generate, on the rank ſoil of wealth, thoſe ſwarms of ſummer inſects that feed on putrefaction, we ſhould not then be diſguſted by the ſight of ſuch brutal exceſſes.

There is one rule relative to behaviour that, I think, ought to regulate every other; and it is ſimply to cheriſh ſuch an habitual reſpect for mankind as may prevent us from diſguſting a fellow-creature for the ſake of a preſent indulgence. The ſhameful indolence of many married women, and others a little advanced in life, frequently leads them to ſin againſt delicacy. For, though convinced that the perſon is the band of union between the ſexes, yet, how often do they from ſheer indolence,

dolence, or, to enjoy ſome trifling indulgence, diſguſt?

The depravity of the appetite which brings the ſexes together, has had a ſtill more fatal effect. Nature muſt ever be the ſtandard of taſte, the gauge of appetite—yet how groſsly is nature inſulted by the voluptuary. Leaving the refinements of love out of the queſtion; nature, by making the gratification of an appetite, in this reſpect, as well as every other, a natural and imperious law to preſerve the ſpecies, exalts the appetite, and mixes a little mind and affection with a ſenſual guſt. The feelings of a parent mingling with an inſtinct merely animal, give it dignity; and the man and woman often meeting on account of the child, a mutual intereſt and affection is excited by the exerciſe of a common ſympathy. Women then having neceſſarily ſome duty to fulfil, more noble than to adorn their perſons, would not contentedly be the ſlaves of caſual luſt; which is now the ſituation of a very conſiderable number who are, literally ſpeaking, ſtanding diſhes to which every glutton may have acceſs.

I may be told that great as this enormity is, it only affects a devoted part of the ſex—devoted for the ſalvation of the reſt. But, falſe as every aſſertion might eaſily be proved, that recommends the ſanctioning a ſmall evil to produce a greater good; the miſchief does not ſtop here, for the moral character, and peace of mind, of the chaſter part of the ſex, is undermined by the conduct of the very women to whom they allow no refuge from guilt: whom they inexorably conſign to the exerciſe of arts that lure their huſbands from them, debauch their ſons, and force them, let not modeſt women ſtart, to aſſume, in ſome degree, the ſame character themſelves. For I will venture to aſſert, that all the cauſes of female weakneſs, as well as depravity, which I have already enlarged on, branch out of one grand cauſe—want of chaſtity in men.

This intemperance, ſo prevalent, depraves the appetite to ſuch a degree, that a wanton ſtimulus is neceſſary to rouſe it; but the parental deſign of nature is forgotten, and the mere perſon, and that for a moment, alone engroſſes the thoughts. So voluptuous, indeed, often grows the luſtful prowler, that he refines on female ſoftneſs. Something more ſoft than woman is then ſought for; till, in Italy and Portugal, men attend the levees of equivocal beings, to ſigh for more than female languor.

To ſatisfy this genus of men, women are made ſyſtematically voluptuous, and though they may not all carry their libertiniſm to the ſame height, yet this heartleſs intercourſe with the ſex, which they allow themſelves, depraves both ſexes, becauſe the taſte of men is vitiated; and women, of all claſſes, naturally ſquare their behaviour to gratify the taſte by which they obtain pleaſure and power. Women becoming, conſequently, weaker, in mind and body, than they ought to be, were one of the grand ends of their being taken into the account, that of bearing and nurſing children, have not ſufficient ſtrength to diſcharge the firſt duty of a mother; and ſacrificing to laſciviouſneſs the parental affection, that ennobles inſtinct, either deſtroy the embryo in the womb, or caſt it off when born. Nature in every thing demands reſpect, and thoſe who violate her laws ſeldom violate them with impunity. The weak enervated women who particularly catch the attention of libertines, are unfit to be mothers, though they may conceive; ſo that the rich ſenſualiſt, who has rioted among women, ſpreading depravity and miſery, when he wiſhes to perpetuate his name, receives from his wife only an half-formed being that inherits both its father's and mother's weakneſs.

Contraſting the humanity of the preſent age with the barbariſm of antiquity, great ſtreſs has been laid on the ſavage cuſtom of expoſing the children whom their parents could not maintain; whilſt the man of ſenſibility, who thus, perhaps, complains, by his promiſcuous amours produces a moſt deſtructive barrenneſs and contagious flagitiouſneſs of manners. Surely nature never intended that women, by ſatisfying an appetite, ſhould fruſtrate the very purpoſe for which it was implanted?

I have before obſerved, that men ought to maintain the women whom they have ſeduced; this would be one means of reforming female manners, and ſtopping an abuſe that has an equally fatal effect on population and morals. Another, no leſs obvious, would be to turn the attention of woman to the real virtue of chaſtity; for to little reſpect has that woman a

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claim, on the ſcore of modeſty, though her reputation may be white as the driven ſnow, who ſmiles on the libertine whilſt ſhe ſpurns the victims of his lawleſs appetites and their own folly.

Beſides, ſhe has a taint of the ſame folly, pure as ſhe eſteems herſelf, when ſhe ſtudiouſly adorns her perſon only to be ſeen by men, to excite reſpectful ſighs, and all the idle homage of what is called innocent gallantry. Did women really reſpect virtue for its own ſake, they would not ſeek for a compenſation in vanity, for the ſelf-denial which they are obliged to practiſe to preſerve their reputation, nor would they aſſociate with men who ſet reputation at defiance.

The two ſexes mutually corrupt and improve each other. This I believe to be an indiſputable truth, extending it to every virtue. Chaſtity, modeſty, public ſpirit, and all the noble train of virtues, on which ſocial virtue and happineſs is built, ſhould be underſtood and cultivated by all mankind, or they will be cultivated to little effect. And, inſtead of furniſhing the vicious or idle with a pretext for violating ſome ſacred duty, by terming it a ſexual one, it would be wiſer to

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ſhew that nature has not made any difference, for that the unchaſte man doubly defeats the purpoſe of nature, by rendering women barren, and deſtroying his own conſtitution, though he avoids the ſhame that purſues the crime in the other ſex. Theſe are the phyſical conſequences, the moral are ſtill more alarming; for virtue is only a nominal diſtinction when the duties of citizens, huſbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and directors of families, become merely the ſelfiſh ties of convenience.

Why then do philoſophers look for public ſpirit? Public ſpirit muſt be nurtured by private virtue, or it will reſemble the factitious ſentiment which makes women careful to preſerve their reputation, and men their honour. A ſentiment that often exiſts unſupported by virtue, unſupported by that ſublime morality which makes the habitual breach of one duty a breach of the whole moral law.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IX.

### OF THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS WHICH ARISE FROM THE UNNATURAL DISTINCTIONS ESTABLISHED IN SOCIETY.

FROM the reſpect paid to property flow, as from a poiſoned fountain, moſt of the evils and vices which render this world ſuch a dreary ſcene to the contemplative mind. For it is in the moſt poliſhed ſociety that noiſome reptiles and venomous ſerpents lurk under the rank herbage; and there is voluptuouſneſs pampered by the ſtill ſultry air, which relaxes every good diſpoſition before it ripens into virtue.

One claſs preſſes on another; for all are aiming to procure reſpect on account of their property: and property, once gained, will procure the reſpect due only to talents and virtue. Men neglect the duties incumbent on man, yet are treated like demi-gods; religion is alſo ſeparated from morality by a ceremonial veil, yet men wonder that the world is almoſt, literally ſpeaking, a den of ſharpers or oppreſſors.

There is a homely proverb, which ſpeaks a ſhrewd truth, that whoever the devil finds idle he will employ. And what but habitual idleneſs can hereditary wealth and titles produce? For man is ſo conſtituted that he can only attain a proper uſe of his faculties by exerciſing them, and will not exerciſe them unleſs neceſſity, of ſome kind, firſt ſet the wheels in motion. Virtue likewiſe can only be acquired by the diſcharge of relative duties; but the importance of theſe ſacred duties will ſcarcely be felt by the being who is cajoled out of his humanity by the flattery of ſycophants. There muſt be more equality eſtabliſhed in ſociety, or morality will never gain ground, and this virtuous equality will not reſt firmly even when founded on a rock, if one half of mankind are chained to its bottom by fate, for they will be continually undermining it through ignorance or pride.

It is vain to expect virtue from women till they are, in ſome degree, independent of men; nay, it is vain to expect that ſtrength of natural affection, which would make them good wives and mothers. Whilſt they are abſolutely dependent on their huſbands they will be cunning, mean, and ſelfiſh, and the men who can be gratified by the fawning fondneſs of ſpaniel-like affection, have not much delicacy, for love is not to be bought, in any ſenſe of the words, its ſilken wings are inſtantly ſhrivelled up when any thing beſide a return in kind is ſought. Yet whilſt wealth enervates men; and women live, as it were, by their perſonal charms, how can we expect them to diſcharge thoſe ennobling duties which equally require exertion and ſelf-denial. Hereditary property ſophiſticates the mind, and the unfortunate victims to it, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, ſwathed from their birth, ſeldom exert the locomotive faculty of body or mind; and, thus viewing every thing through one medium, and that a falſe one, they are unable to diſcern in what true merit and happineſs conſiſt. Falſe, indeed, muſt be the light when the drapery of ſituation hides the man, and makes him ſtalk in maſquerade, dragging from one ſcene of diſſipation to another the nerveleſs limbs that hang with ſtupid liſtleſſneſs, and rolling round the vacant eye which plainly tells us that there is no mind at home.

I mean, therefore, to infer that the ſociety is not properly organized which does not

compel men and women to diſcharge their reſpective duties, by making it the only way to acquire that countenance from their fellow-creatures, which every human being wiſhes ſome way to attain. The reſpect, conſequently, which is paid to wealth and mere perſonal charms, is a true north-eaſt blaſt, that blights the tender bloſſoms of affection and virtue. Nature has wiſely attached affections to duties, to ſweeten toil, and to give that vigour to the exertions of reaſon which only the heart can give. But, the affection which is put on merely becauſe it is the appropriated inſignia of a certain character, when its duties are not fulfilled, is one of the empty compliments which vice and folly are obliged to pay to virtue and the real nature of things.

To illuſtrate my opinion, I need only obſerve, that when a woman is admired for her beauty, and ſuffers herſelf to be ſo far intoxicated by the admiration ſhe receives, as to neglect to diſcharge the indiſpenſable duty of a mother, ſhe ſins againſt herſelf by neglecting to cultivate an affection that would equally tend to make her uſeful and happy. True happineſs, I mean all the contentment, and virtuous ſatisfaction, that can be ſnatched in this imperfect ſtate, muſt ariſe from well regulated affections; and an affection includes a duty. Men are not aware of the miſery they cauſe, and the vicious weakneſs they cheriſh, by only inciting women to render themſelves pleaſing; they do not conſider that they thus make natural and artificial duties claſh, by ſacrificing the comfort and reſpectability of a woman's life to voluptuous notions of beauty, when in nature they all harmonize.

Cold would be the heart of a huſband, were he not rendered unnatural by early debauchery, who did not feel more delight at ſeeing his child ſuckled by its mother, than the moſt artful wanton tricks could ever raiſe; yet this natural way of cementing the matrimonial tie, and twiſting eſteem with fonder recollections, wealth leads women to ſpurn. To preſerve their beauty, and wear the flowery crown of the day, that gives them a kind of right to reign for a ſhort time over the ſex, they neglect to ſtamp impreſſions on their huſbands' hearts, that would be remembered with more tenderneſs when the ſnow on the head began to chill the boſom, than

even their virgin charms. The maternal ſolicitude of a reaſonable affectionate woman is very intereſting, and the chaſtened dignity with which a mother returns the careſſes that ſhe and her child receive from a father who has been fulfilling the ſerious duties of his ſtation, is not only a reſpectable, but a beautiful ſight. So ſingular, indeed, are my feelings, and I have endeavoured not to catch factitious ones, that after having been fatigued with the ſight of inſipid grandeur and the ſlaviſh ceremonies that with cumberous pomp ſupplied the place of domeſtic affections, I have turned to ſome other ſcene to relieve my eye by reſting it on the refreſhing green every where ſcattered by nature. I have then viewed with pleaſure a woman nurſing her children, and diſcharging the duties of her ſtation with, perhaps, merely a ſervant maid to take off her hands the ſervile part of the houſehold buſineſs. I have ſeen her prepare herſelf and children, with only the luxury of cleanlineſs, to receive her huſband, who returning weary home in the evening found ſmiling babes and a clean hearth. My heart has loitered in the midſt of the group, and has even throbbed with ſympathetic emotion, when the ſcraping of the well known foot has raiſed a pleaſing tumult.

Whilſt my benevolence has been gratified by contemplating this artleſs picture, I have thought that a couple of this deſcription, equally neceſſary and independent of each other, becauſe each fulfilled the reſpective duties of their ſtation, poſſeſſed all that life could give.—Raiſed ſufficiently above abject poverty not to be obliged to weigh the conſequence of every farthing they ſpend, and having ſufficient to prevent their attending to a frigid ſyſtem of œconomy, which narrows both heart and mind. I declare, ſo vulgar are my conceptions, that I know not what is wanted to render this the happieſt as well as the moſt reſpectable ſituation in the world, but a taſte for literature, to throw a little variety and intereſt into ſocial converſe, and ſome ſuperfluous money to give to the needy and to buy books. For it is not pleaſant when the heart is opened by compaſſion and the head active in arranging plans of uſefulneſs, to have a prim urchin continually twitching back the elbow to prevent the hand from drawing out an almoſt empty purſe, whiſpering at the ſame time ſome

prudential maxim about the priority of juſtice.

Deſtructive, however, as riches and inherited honours are to the human character, women are more debaſed and cramped, if poſſible, by them, than men, becauſe men may ſtill, in ſome degree, unfold their faculties by becoming ſoldiers and ſtateſmen.

As ſoldiers, I grant, they can now only gather, for the moſt part, vain glorious laurels, whilſt they adjuſt to a hair the European balance, taking eſpecial care that no bleak northern nook or ſound incline the beam. But the days of true heroiſm are over, when a citizen fought for his country like a Fabricius or a Waſhington, and then returned to his farm to let his virtuous fervour run in a more placid, but not a leſs ſalutary, ſtream. No, our Britiſh heroes are oftener ſent from the gaming table than from the plow; and their paſſions have been rather inflamed by hanging with dumb ſuſpenſe on the turn of a die, than ſublimated by panting after the adventurous march of virtue in the hiſtoric page.

The ſtateſman, it is true, might with more propriety quit the Faro Bank, or card-table, to guide the helm, for he has ſtill but to ſhuffle and trick. The whole ſyſtem of Britiſh politics, if ſyſtem it may courteouſly be called, conſiſting in multiplying dependents and contriving taxes which grind the poor to pamper the rich; thus a war, or any wild gooſe chace is, as the vulgar uſe the phraſe, a lucky turn-up of patronage for the miniſter, whoſe chief merit is the art of keeping himſelf in place.

It is not neceſſary then that he ſhould have bowels for the poor, ſo he can ſecure for his family the odd trick. Or ſhould ſome ſhew of reſpect, for what is termed with ignorant oſtentation an Engliſhman's birth-right, be expedient to bubble the gruff maſtiff that he has to lead by the noſe, he can make an empty ſhew, very ſafely, by giving his ſingle voice, and ſuffering his light ſquadron to file off to the other ſide. And when a queſtion of humanity is agitated he may dip a ſop in the milk of human kindneſs, to ſilence Cerberus, and talk of the intereſt which his heart takes in an attempt to make the earth no longer cry for vengeance as it ſucks in its children's blood, though his cold hand may at the very moment rivet their chains, by ſanctioning

the abominable traffick. A miniſter is no longer a miniſter than while he can carry a point, which he is determined to carry.—Yet it is not neceſſary that a miniſter ſhould feel like a man, when a bold puſh might ſhake his ſeat.

But, to have done with theſe epiſodical obſervations, let me return to the more ſpecious ſlavery which chains the very ſoul of woman, keeping her for ever under the bondage of ignorance.

The prepoſterous diſtinctions of rank, which render civilization a curſe, by dividing the world between voluptuous tyrants, and cunning envious dependents, corrupt, almoſt equally, every claſs of people, becauſe reſpectability is not attached to the diſcharge of the relative duties of life, but to the ſtation, and when the duties are not fulfilled the affections cannot gain ſufficient ſtrength to fortify the virtue of which they are the natural reward. Still there are ſome loop-holes out of which a man may creep, and dare to think and act for himſelf; but for a woman it is an herculean taſk, becauſe ſhe has difficulties peculiar to her ſex to overcome, which require almoſt ſuperhuman powers.

A truly benevolent legiſlator always endeavours to make it the intereſt of each individual to be virtuous; and thus private virtue becoming the cement of public happineſs, an orderly whole is conſolidated by the tendency of all the parts towards a common centre. But, the private or public virtue of woman is very problematical; for Rouſſeau, and a numerous liſt of male writers, inſiſt that ſhe ſhould all her life be ſubjected to a ſevere reſtraint, that of propriety. Why ſubject her to propriety—blind propriety, if ſhe be capable of acting from a nobler ſpring, if ſhe be an heir of immortality? Is ſugar always to be produced by vital blood? Is one half of the human ſpecies, like the poor African ſlaves, to be ſubject to prejudices that brutalize them, when principles would be a ſurer guard, only to ſweeten the cup of man? Is not this indirectly to deny woman reaſon? for a gift is a mockery, if it be unfit for uſe.

Women are, in common with men, rendered weak and luxurious by the relaxing pleaſures which wealth procures; but added to this they are made ſlaves to their perſons, and muſt render them alluring that man may

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lend them his reaſon to guide their tottering ſteps aright. Or ſhould they be ambitious, they muſt govern their tyrants by ſiniſter tricks, for without rights there cannot be any incumbent duties. The laws reſpecting woman, which I mean to diſcuſs in a future part, make an abſurd unit of a man and his wife; and then, by the eaſy tranſition of only conſidering him as reſponſible, ſhe is reduced to a mere cypher.

The being who diſcharges the duties of its ſtation is independent; and, ſpeaking of women at large, their firſt duty is to themſelves as rational creatures, and the next, in point of importance, as citizens, is that, which includes ſo many, of a mother. The rank in life which diſpenſes with their fulfilling this duty, neceſſarily degrades them by making them mere dolls. Or, ſhould they turn to ſomething more important than merely fitting drapery upon a ſmooth block, their minds are only occupied by ſome ſoft platonic attachment; or, the actual management of an intrigue may keep their thoughts in motion; for when they neglect domeſtic duties, they have it not in their power to take the field and march and counter-march like ſoldiers, or wrangle in the ſenate to keep their faculties from ruſting.

I know that as a proof of the inferiority of the ſex, Rouſſeau has exultingly exclaimed, How can they leave the nurſery for the camp! —And the camp has by ſome moraliſts been termed the ſchool of the moſt heroic virtues; though, I think, it would puzzle a keen caſuiſt to prove the reaſonableneſs of the greater number of wars that have dubbed heroes. I do not mean to conſider this queſtion critically; becauſe, having frequently viewed theſe freaks of ambition as the firſt natural mode of civilization, when the ground muſt be torn up, and the woods cleared by fire and ſword, I do not chooſe to call them peſts; but ſurely the preſent ſyſtem of war has little connection with virtue of any denomination, being rather the ſchool of *fineſſe* and effeminacy, than of fortitude.

Yet, if defenſive war, the only juſtifiable war, in the preſent advanced ſtate of ſociety, where virtue can ſhew its face and ripen amidſt the rigours which purify the air on the mountain's top, were alone to be adopted as juſt and glorious, the true heroiſm of antiquity might again animate female boſoms.—

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But fair and ſoftly, gentle reader, male or female, do not alarm thyſelf, for though I have contraſted the character of a modern ſoldier with that of a civilized woman, I am not going to adviſe them to turn their diſtaff into a muſket, though I ſincerely wiſh to ſee the bayonet converted into a pruning-hook. I only recreated an imagination, fatigued by contemplating the vices and follies which all proceed from a feculent ſtream of wealth that has muddied the pure rills of natural affection, by ſuppoſing that ſociety will ſome time or other be ſo conſtituted, that man muſt neceſſarily fulfil the duties of a citizen, or be deſpiſed, and that while he was employed in any of the departments of civil life, his wife, alſo an active citizen, ſhould be equally intent to manage her family, educate her children, and aſſiſt her neighbours.

But, to render her really virtuous and uſeful, ſhe muſt not, if ſhe diſcharge her civil duties, want, individually, the protection of civil laws; ſhe muſt not be dependent on her huſband's bounty for her ſubſiſtence during his life, or ſupport after his death—for how can a being be generous who has nothing of its own? or, virtuous, who is not free?

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The wife, in the preſent ſtate of things, who is faithful to her huſband, and neither ſuckles nor educates her children, ſcarcely deſerves the name of a wife, and has no right to that of a citizen. But take away natural rights, and there is of courſe an end of duties.

Women thus infallibly become only the wanton ſolace of men, when they are ſo weak in mind and body, that they cannot exert themſelves, unleſs to purſue ſome frothy pleaſure, or to invent ſome frivolous faſhion. What can be a more melancholy ſight to a thinking mind, than to look into the numerous carriages that drive helter-ſkelter about this metropolis in a morning full of pale-faced creatures who are flying from themſelves. I have often wiſhed, with Dr. Johnſon, to place ſome of them in a little ſhop with half a dozen children looking up to their languid countenances for ſupport. I am much miſtaken, if ſome latent vigour would not ſoon give health and ſpirit to their eyes, and ſome lines drawn by the exerciſe of reaſon on the blank cheeks, which before were only undulated by dimples, might reſtore loſt dignity to the character, or rather enable it to attain the true dignity of its nature. Virtue is not to

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be acquired even by ſpeculation, much leſs by the negative ſupineneſs that wealth naturally generates.

Beſides, when poverty is more diſgraceful than even vice, is not morality cut to the quick ? Still to avoid miſconſtruction, though I conſider that women in the common walks of life are called to fulfil the duties of wives and mothers, by religion and reaſon, I cannot help lamenting that women of a ſuperiour caſt have not a road open by which they can purſue more extenſive plans of uſefulneſs and independence. I may excite laughter, by dropping an hint, which I mean to purſue, ſome future time, for I really think that women ought to have repreſentatives, inſtead of being arbitrarily governed without having any direct ſhare allowed them in the deliberations of government.

But, as the whole ſyſtem of repreſentation is now, in this country, only a convenient handle for deſpotiſm, they need not complain, for they are as well repreſented as a numerous claſs of hard working mechanics, who pay for the ſupport of royalty when they can ſcarcely ſtop their children's mouths with bread. How are they repreſented whoſe very ſweat ſupports the ſplendid ſtud of an heir apparent, or varniſhes the chariot of ſome female favourite who looks down on ſhame? Taxes on the very neceſſaries of life, enable an endleſs tribe of idle princes and princeſſes to paſs with ſtupid pomp before a gaping crowd, who almoſt worſhip the very parade which coſts them ſo dear. This is mere gothic grandeur, ſomething like the barbarous uſeleſs parade of having ſentinels on horſeback at Whitehall, which I could never view without a mixture of contempt and indignation.

How ſtrangely muſt the mind be ſophiſticated when this ſort of ſtate impreſſes it! But, till theſe monuments of folly are levelled by virtue, ſimilar follies will leaven the whole maſs. For the ſame character, in ſome degree, will prevail in the aggregate of ſociety: and the refinements of luxury, or the vicious repinings of envious poverty, will equally baniſh virtue from ſociety, conſidered as the characteriſtic of that ſociety, or only allow it to appear as one of the ſtripes of the harlequin coat, worn by the civilized man.

In the ſuperiour ranks of life, every duty is done by deputies, as if duties could ever

be waved, and the vain pleaſures which conſequent idleneſs forces the rich to purſue, appear ſo enticing to the next rank, that the numerous ſcramblers for wealth ſacrifice every thing to tread on their heels. The moſt ſacred truſts are then conſidered as ſinecures, becauſe they were procured by intereſt, and only ſought to enable a man to keep *good company*. Women, in particular, all want to be ladies. Which is ſimply to have nothing to do, but liſtleſsly to go they ſcarcely care where, for they cannot tell what.

But what have women to do in ſociety? I may be aſked, but to loiter with eaſy grace; ſurely you would not condemn them all to ſuckle fools and chronicle ſmall beer! No. Women might certainly ſtudy the art of healing, and be phyſicians as well as nurſes. And midwifery, decency ſeems to allot to them, though I am afraid the word midwife, in our dictionaries, will ſoon give place to *accoucheur*, and one proof of the former delicacy of the ſex be effaced from the language.

They might, alſo, ſtudy politics, and ſettle their benevolence on the broadeſt baſis; for the reading of hiſtory will ſcarcely be more uſeful than the peruſal of romances, if read as mere biography; if the character of the times, the political improvements, arts, &c. be not obſerved. In ſhort, if it be not conſidered as the hiſtory of man; and not of particular men, who filled a niche in the temple of fame, and dropped into the black rolling ſtream of time, that ſilently ſweeps all before it, into the ſhapeleſs void called—eternity.—For ſhape, can it be called, 'that 'ſhape hath none?'

Buſineſs of various kinds, they might likewiſe purſue, if they were educated in a more orderly manner, which might ſave many from common and legal proſtitution. Women would not then marry for a ſupport, as men accept of places under government, and neglect the implied duties; nor would an attempt to earn their own ſubſiſtence, a moſt laudable one! ſink them almoſt to the level of thoſe poor abandoned creatures who live by proſtitution. For are not milliners and mantua-makers reckoned the next claſs? The few employments open to women, ſo far from being liberal, are menial; and when a ſuperiour education enables them to take charge of the education of children as gover-

neſſes,

neſſes, they are not treated like the tutors of ſons, though even clerical tutors are not always treated in a manner calculated to render them reſpectable in the eyes of their pupils, to ſay nothing of the private comfort of the individual. But as women educated like gentlewomen, are never deſigned for the humiliating ſituation which neceſſity ſometimes forces them to fill; theſe ſituations are conſidered in the light of a degradation; and they know little of the human heart, who need to be told, that nothing ſo painfully ſharpens the ſenſibility as ſuch a fall in life.

Some of theſe women might be reſtrained from marrying by a proper ſpirit or delicacy, and others may not have had it in their power to eſcape in this pitiful way from ſervitude; is not that government then very defective, and very unmindful of the happineſs of one half of its members, that does not provide for honeſt, independent women, by encouraging them to fill reſpectable ſtations? But in order to render their private virtue a public benefit, they muſt have a civil exiſtence in the ſtate, married or ſingle; elſe we ſhall continually ſee ſome worthy woman, whoſe ſenſibility has been rendered painfully acute by undeſerved contempt, droop like ‘ the ‘ lily broken down by a plow-ſhare.’

It is a melancholy truth; yet ſuch is the bleſſed effect of civilization! the moſt reſpectable women are the moſt oppreſſed; and, unleſs they have underſtandings far ſuperiour to the common run of underſtandings, taking in both ſexes, they muſt, from being treated like contemptible beings, become contemptible. How many women thus waſte life away the prey of diſcontent, who might have practiſed as phyſicians, regulated a farm, managed a ſhop, and ſtood erect, ſupported by their own induſtry, inſtead of hanging their heads ſurcharged with the dew of ſenſibility, that conſumes the beauty to which it at firſt gave luſtre; nay, I doubt whether pity and love are ſo near akin as poets feign, for I have ſeldom ſeen much compaſſion excited by the helpleſſneſs of females, unleſs they were fair; then, perhaps, pity was the ſoft handmaid of love, or the harbinger of luſt.

How much more reſpectable is the woman who earns her own bread by fulfilling any duty, than the moſt accompliſhed beauty!—beauty did I ſay?—ſo ſenſible am I of the beauty of moral lovelineſs, or the harmonious propriety that attunes the paſſions of a well-regulated mind, that I bluſh at making the compariſon; yet I ſigh to think how few women aim at attaining this reſpectability by withdrawing from the giddy whirl of pleaſure, or the indolent calm that ſtupifies the good ſort of women it ſucks in.

Proud of their weakneſs, however, they muſt always be protected, guarded from care, and all the rough toils that dignify the mind.—If this be the fiat of fate, if they will make themſelves inſignificant and contemptible, ſweetly to waſte ‘ life away,’ let them not expect to be valued when their beauty fades, for it is the fate of the faireſt flowers to be admired and pulled to pieces by the careleſs hand that plucked them. In how many ways do I wiſh, from the pureſt benevolence, to impreſs this truth on my ſex; yet I fear that they will not liſten to a truth that dear bought experience has brought home to many an agitated boſom, nor willingly reſign the privileges of rank and ſex for the privileges of humanity, to which thoſe have no claim who do not diſcharge its duties.

Thoſe writers are particularly uſeful, in my opinion, who make man feel for man, independent of the ſtation he fills, or the drapery of factitious ſentiments. I then would fain convince reaſonable men of the importance of ſome of my remarks, and prevail on them to weigh diſpaſſionately the whole tenor of my obſervations.—I appeal to their underſtandings; and, as a fellow-creature claim, in the name of my ſex, ſome intereſt in their hearts. I entreat them to aſſiſt to emancipate their companion, to make her a help meet for them!

Would men but generouſly ſnap our chains, and be content with rational fellowſhip inſtead of ſlaviſh obedience, they would find us more obſervant daughters, more affectionate ſiſters, more faithful wives, more reaſonable mothers—in a word, better citizens. We ſhould then love them with true affection, becauſe we ſhould learn to reſpect ourſelves; and the peace of mind of a worthy man would not be interrupted by the idle vanity of his wife, nor his babes ſent to neſtle in a ſtrange boſom, having never found a home in their mother's.

## CHAP. X.

### PARENTAL AFFECTION.

PARENTAL affection is, perhaps, the blindeſt modification of perverſe ſelf-love; for we have not, like the French [*], two terms to diſtinguiſh the purſuit of a natural and reaſonable deſire, from the ignorant calculations of weakneſs. Parents often love their children in the moſt brutal manner, and ſacrifice every relative duty to promote their advancement in the world.—To promote, ſuch is the perverſity of unprincipled prejudices, the future welfare of the very beings whoſe preſent exiſtence they imbitter by the moſt deſpotic ſtretch of power. Power, in fact, is ever true to its vital principle, for in every ſhape it would reign without controul or inquiry. Its throne is built acroſs a dark abyſs, which no eye muſt dare to explore, leſt the baſeleſs fabric ſhould totter under inveſtigation. Obedience, unconditional obedience, is the catch-word of tyrants of every deſcription, and to render ‘ aſſurance doubly ſure,’ one kind of deſpotiſm ſupports another. Tyrants would have cauſe to tremble if reaſon were to become the rule of duty in any of the relations of life, for the light might ſpread till perfect day appeared. And when it did appear, how would men ſmile at the ſight of the bugbears at which they ſtarted during the night of ignorance, or the twilight of timid inquiry.

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[*] *L'amour propre. L'amour de ſoi même.*

Parental affection, indeed, in many minds, is but a pretext to tyrannize where it can be done with impunity, for only good and wiſe men are content with the reſpect that will bear diſcuſſion. Convinced that they have a right to what they inſiſt on, they do not fear reaſon, or dread the ſifting of ſubjects that recur to natural juſtice: becauſe they firmly believe that the more enlightened the human mind becomes the deeper root will juſt and ſimple principles take. They do not reſt in expedients, or grant that what is metaphyſically true can be practically falſe; but diſdaining the ſhifts of the moment they calmly wait till time, ſanctioning innovation, ſilences the hiſs of ſelfiſhneſs or envy.

If the power of reflecting on the paſt, and darting the keen eye of contemplation into futurity, be the grand privilege of man, it muſt be granted that ſome people enjoy this prerogative in a very limited degree. Every thing now appears to them wrong; and not able to diſtinguiſh the poſſible from the monſtrous, they fear where no fear ſhould find a place, running from the light of reaſon, as if it were a firebrand; yet the limits of the poſſible have never been defined to ſtop the ſturdy innovator's hand.

Woman, however, a ſlave in every ſituation to prejudice, ſeldom exerts enlightened maternal affection; for ſhe either neglects her children, or ſpoils them by improper indulgence. Beſides, the affection of ſome women for their children is, as I have before termed it, frequently very brutiſh: for it eradicates every ſpark of humanity. Juſtice, truth, every thing is ſacrificed by theſe Rebekah's, and for the ſake of their *own* children they violate the moſt ſacred duties, forgetting the common relationſhip that binds the whole family on earth together. Yet, reaſon ſeems to ſay, that they who ſuffer one duty, or affection, to ſwallow up the reſt, have not ſufficient heart or mind to fulfil that one conſcientiouſly. It then loſes the venerable aſpect of a duty, and aſſumes the fantaſtic form of a whim.

As the care of children in their infancy is one of the grand duties annexed to the female character by nature, this duty would afford many forcible arguments for ſtrengthening the female underſtanding, if it were properly conſidered.

The formation of the mind muſt be begun very early, and the temper, in particular, requires the moſt judicious attention—an attention which women cannot pay who only love their children becauſe they are their children, and ſeek no further for the foundation of their duty, than in the feelings of the moment. It is this want of reaſon in their affections which makes women ſo often run into extremes, and either be the moſt fond or moſt careleſs and unnatural mothers.

To be a good mother—a woman muſt have ſenſe, and that independence of mind which few women poſſeſs who are taught to depend entirely on their huſbands. Meek wives are, in general, fooliſh mothers; wanting their children to love them beſt, and take their part, in ſecret, againſt the father, who is held up as a ſcarecrow. If they are to be puniſhed, though they have offended the mother, the father muſt inflict the puniſhment; he muſt be the judge in all diſputes: but I ſhall more fully diſcuſs this ſubject when I treat of private education, I now only mean to inſiſt, that unleſs the underſtanding of woman be enlarged, and her character rendered more firm, by being allowed to govern her own conduct, ſhe will never have ſufficient ſenſe or command of temper to manage her children properly. Her parental affection, indeed, ſcarcely deſerves the name, when it does not lead her to ſuckle her children, becauſe the diſcharge of this duty is equally calculated to inſpire maternal and filial affection: and it is the indiſpenſable duty of men and women to fulfil the duties which give birth to affections that are the ſureſt preſervatives againſt vice. Natural affection, as it is termed, I believe to be a very faint tie, affections muſt grow out of the habitual exerciſe of a mutual ſympathy; and what ſympathy does a mother exerciſe who ſends her babe to a nurſe, and only takes it from a nurſe to ſend it to a ſchool?

In the exerciſe of their maternal feelings providence has furniſhed women with a natural ſubſtitute for love, when the lover becomes only a friend and mutual confidence takes place of overſtrained admiration—a child then gently twiſts the relaxing cord, and a mutual care produces a new mutual ſympathy.—But a child, though a pledge of affection, will not enliven it, if both father and mother are content to transfer the charge to hirelings; for they who do their duty by proxy ſhould not murmur if they miſs the reward of duty—parental affection produces filial duty.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XI.

### DUTY TO PARENTS.

THERE ſeems to be an indolent propenſity in man to make preſcription always take place of reaſon, and to place every duty on an arbitrary foundation. The rights of kings are deduced in a direct line from the King of kings; and that of parents from our firſt parent.

Why do we thus go back for principles that ſhould always reſt on the ſame baſe, and have the ſame weight to-day that they had a thouſand years ago—and not a jot more? If parents diſcharge their duty they have a ſtrong hold and ſacred claim on the gratitude of their children; but few parents are willing to receive the reſpectful affection of their offspring on ſuch terms. They demand blind obedience, becauſe they do not merit a reaſonable ſervice: and to render theſe demands of weakneſs and ignorance more binding, a myſterious ſanctity is ſpread round the moſt arbitrary principle; for what other name can be given to the blind duty of obeying vicious or weak beings merely becauſe they obeyed a powerful inſtinct?

The ſimple definition of the reciprocal duty, which naturally ſubſiſts between parent and child, may be given in a few words: The parent who pays proper attention to helpleſs infancy has a right to require the ſame attention when the feebleneſs of age comes upon him. But to ſubjugate a rational being to the mere will of another, after he is of age to anſwer to ſociety for his own conduct, is a moſt cruel and undue ſtretch of power; and, perhaps, as injurious to morality as thoſe religious ſyſtems which do not allow right and wrong to have any exiſtence, but in the Divine will.

I never knew a parent who had paid more than common attention to his children, diſregarded *; on the contrary, the early habit of relying almoſt implicitly on the opinion of a reſpected parent is not eaſily ſhook, even when matured reaſon convinces the child that his father is not the wiſeſt man in the world. This weakneſs, for a weakneſs it is, though the epithet amiable may be tacked to it, a reaſonable man muſt ſteel himſelf againſt; for the abſurd duty, too often inculcated, of obeying a parent only on account of his being a parent, ſhackles the mind, and prepares it for a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion to any power but reaſon.

I diſtinguiſh between the natural and accidental duty due to parents.

The parent who ſeduloully endeavours to form the heart and enlarge the underſtanding of his child, has given that dignity to the diſcharge of a duty, common to the whole animal world, that only reaſon can give. This is the parental affection of humanity, and leaves inſtinctive natural affection far behind. Such a parent acquires all the rights of the moſt ſacred friendſhip, and his advice, even when his child is advanced in life, demands ſerious conſideration.

With reſpect to marriage, though after one and twenty a parent ſeems to have no right to withhold his conſent on any account; yet twenty years of ſolicitude call for a return, and the ſon ought, at leaſt, to promiſe not to marry for two or three years, ſhould

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* Dr. Johnſon makes the ſame obſervation.

the object of his choice not entirely meet with the approbation of his firſt friend.

But, reſpect for parents is, generally ſpeaking, a much more debaſing principle; it is only a ſelfiſh reſpect for property. The father who is blindly obeyed, is obeyed from ſheer weakneſs, or from motives that degrade the human character.

A great proportion of the miſery that wanders, in hideous forms around the world, is allowed to riſe from the negligence of parents; and ſtill theſe are the people who are moſt tenacious of what they term a natural right, though it be ſubverſive of the birth-right of man, the right of acting according to the direction of his own reaſon.

I have already very frequently had occaſion to obſerve, that vicious or indolent people are always eager to profit by enforcing arbitrary privileges; and, generally, in the ſame proportion as they neglect the diſcharge of the duties which alone render the privileges reaſonable. This is at the bottom a dictate of common ſenſe, or the inſtinct of ſelf-defence, peculiar to ignorant weakneſs; reſembling that inſtinct, which makes a fiſh muddy the water it ſwims in to elude its enemy, inſtead of boldly facing it in the clear ſtream.

From the clear ſtream of argument, indeed, the ſupporters of preſcription, of every denomination, fly; and, taking refuge in the darkneſs, which, in the language of ſublime poetry, has been ſuppoſed to ſurround the throne of Omnipotence, they dare to demand that implicit reſpect which is only due to His unſearchable ways. But, let me not be thought preſumptuous, the darkneſs which hides our God from us, only reſpects ſpeculative truths—it never obſcures moral ones, they ſhine clearly, for God is light, and never, by the conſtitution of our nature, requires the diſcharge of a duty, the reaſonableneſs of which does not beam on us when we open our eyes.

The indolent parent of high rank may, it is true, extort a ſhew of reſpect from his child, and females on the continent are particularly ſubject to the views of their families, who never think of conſulting their inclination, or providing for the comfort of the poor victims of their pride. The conſequence is notorious; theſe dutiful daughters become adultereſſes, and neglect the education of their children, from whom they, in their turn, exact the ſame kind of obedience.

Females, it is true, in all countries, are too much under the dominion of their parents; and few parents think of addreſſing their children in the following manner, though it is in this reaſonable way that Heaven ſeems to command the whole human race. It is your intereſt to obey me till you can judge for yourſelf; and the Almighty Father of all has implanted an affection in me to ſerve as a guard to you whilſt your reaſon is unfolding; but when your mind arrives at maturity, you muſt only obey me, or rather reſpect my opinions, ſo far as they coincide with the light that is breaking in on your own mind.

A ſlaviſh bondage to parents cramps every faculty of the mind; and Mr. Locke very judiciouſly obſerves, that ‘ if the mind be ‘ curbed and humbled too much in children; ‘ if their ſpirits be abaſed and broken much ‘ by too ſtrict an hand over them; they loſe ‘ all their vigour and induſtry.’ This ſtrict hand may in ſome degree account for the weakneſs of women; for girls, from various cauſes, are more kept down by their parents,

in every ſenſe of the word, than boys. The duty expected from them is, like all the duties arbitrarily impoſed on women, more from a ſenſe of propriety, more out of reſpect for decorum than reaſon; and thus taught ſlaviſhly to ſubmit to their parents, they are prepared for the ſlavery of marriage. I may be told that a number of women are not ſlaves in the marriage ſtate. True, but they then become tyrants; for it is not rational freedom, but a lawleſs kind of power reſembling the authority exerciſed by the favourites of abſolute monarchs, which they obtain by debaſing means. I do not, likewiſe, dream of inſinuating that either boys or girls are always ſlaves, I only inſiſt that when they are obliged to ſubmit to authority blindly, their faculties are weakened, and their tempers rendered imperious or abject. I alſo lament that parents, indolently availing themſelves of a ſuppoſed privilege, damp the firſt faint glimmering of reaſon, rendering at the ſame time the duty, which they are ſo anxious to enforce, an empty name; becauſe they will not let it reſt on the only baſis on which a duty can reſt ſecurely: for unleſs it be founded on knowledge, it cannot gain ſufficient ſtrength to reſiſt the ſqualls of paſſion, or the ſilent ſapping of ſelf-love. But it is not the parents who have given the ſureſt proof of their affection for their children, or, to ſpeak more properly, who by fulfilling their duty, have allowed a natural parental affection to take root in their hearts, the child of exerciſed ſympathy and reaſon, and not the over-weening offspring of ſelfiſh pride, who moſt vehemently inſiſt on their children ſubmitting to their will merely becauſe it is their will. On the contrary, the parent, who ſets a good example, patiently lets that example work; and it ſeldom fails to produce its natural effect—filial reſpect.

Children cannot be taught too early to ſubmit to reaſon, the true definition of that neceſſity, which Rouſſeau inſiſted on, without defining it; for to ſubmit to reaſon is to ſubmit to the nature of things, and to that God, who formed them ſo, to promote our real intereſt.

Why ſhould the minds of children be warped as they juſt begin to expand, only to favour the indolence of parents, who inſiſt on a privilege without being willing to pay the price fixed by nature? I have before had occaſion to obſerve, that a right always includes a duty, and I think it may, likewiſe, fairly be inferred, that they forfeit the right, who do not fulfil the duty.

It is eaſier, I grant, to command than reaſon; but it does not follow from hence that children cannot comprehend the reaſon why they are made to do certain things habitually; for, from a ſteady adherence to a few ſimple principles of conduct flows that ſalutary power which a judicious parent gradually gains over a child's mind. And this power becomes ſtrong indeed, if tempered by an even diſplay of affection brought home to the child's heart. For, I believe, as a general rule, it muſt be allowed that the affection which we inſpire always reſembles that we cultivate; ſo that natural affections, which have been ſuppoſed almoſt diſtinct from reaſon, may be found more nearly connected with judgment than is commonly allowed. Nay, as another proof of the neceſſity of cultivating the female underſtanding, it is but juſt to obſerve, that the affections ſeem to have a kind of animal capriciouſneſs when they merely reſide in the heart.

It is the irregular exerciſe of parental authority that firſt injures the mind, and to theſe irregularities girls are more ſubject than boys. The will of thoſe who never allow their will to be diſputed, unleſs they happen to be in a good humour, when they relax proportionally, is almoſt always unreaſonable. To elude this arbitrary authority girls very early learn the leſſons which they afterwards practiſe on their huſbands; for I have frequently ſeen a little ſharp-faced miſs rule a whole family, excepting that now and then mamma's angry will burſt out of ſome accidental cloud;—either her hair was ill dreſſed*, or ſhe had loſt more money at cards, the night before, than ſhe was willing to own to her huſband; or ſome ſuch moral cauſe of anger.

After obſerving ſallies of this kind, I have been led into a melancholy train of reflection

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* I myſelf heard a little girl once ſay to a ſervant, 'My mamma has been ſcolding me finely this morning, becauſe her hair was not dreſſed to pleaſe her.' Though this remark was pert, it was juſt. And what reſpect could a girl acquire for ſuch a parent without doing violence to reaſon?

reſpecting females, concluding that when their firſt affection muſt lead them aſtray, or make their duties claſh till they reſt on mere whims and cuſtoms, little can be expected from them as they advance in life. How indeed can an inſtructor remedy this evil? for to teach them virtue on any ſolid principle is to teach them to deſpiſe their parents. Children cannot, ought not, to be taught to make allowance for the faults of their parents, becauſe every ſuch allowance weakens the force of reaſon in their minds, and makes them ſtill more indulgent to their own. It is one of the moſt ſublime virtues of maturity that leads us to be ſevere with reſpect to ourſelves, and forbearing to others; but children ſhould only be taught the ſimple virtues, for if they begin too early to make allowance for human paſſions and manners, they wear off the fine edge of the criterion by which they ſhould regulate their own, and become unjuſt in the ſame proportion as they grow indulgent.

The affections of children, and weak people, are always ſelfiſh; they love others, becauſe they love them, and not on account of their virtues. Yet, till eſteem and love are blended together in the firſt affection, and reaſon made the foundation of the firſt duty, morality will ſtumble at the threſhold. But, till ſociety is very differently conſtituted, parents, I fear, will ſtill inſiſt on being obeyed, becauſe they will be obeyed, and conſtantly endeavour to ſettle that power on a Divine right which will not bear the inveſtigation of reaſon.

## CHAP. XII.

### ON NATIONAL EDUCATION.

THE good effects reſulting from attention to private education will ever be very confined, and the parent who really puts his own hand to the plow, will always, in ſome degree, be diſappointed, till education become a grand national concern. A man cannot retire into a deſert with his child, and if he did he could not bring himſelf back to childhood, and become the proper friend and play-fellow of an infant or youth. And when children are confined to the ſociety of men and women, they very ſoon acquire that kind of premature manhood which ſtops the growth of every vigorous power of mind or body. In order to open their faculties they ſhould be excited to think for themſelves; and this can only be done by mixing a number of children together, and making them jointly purſue the ſame objects.

A child very ſoon contracts a benumbing indolence of mind, which he has ſeldom ſufficient vigour afterwards to ſhake off, when he only aſks a queſtion inſtead of ſeeking for information, and then relies implicitly on the anſwer he receives. With his equals in age this could never be the caſe, and the ſubjects of inquiry, though they might be influenced, would not be entirely under the direction of men, who frequently damp, if not deſtroy, abilities, by bringing them forward too haſtily: and too haſtily they will infallibly be brought forward, if the child be confined to the ſociety of a man, however ſagacious that man may be.

Beſides, in youth the ſeeds of every affection ſhould be ſown, and the reſpectful regard, which is felt for a parent, is very different from the ſocial affections that are to conſtitute the happineſs of life as it advances. Of theſe equality is the baſis, and an intercourſe of ſentiments unclogged by that obſervant ſeriouſneſs which prevents diſputation, though it may not inforce ſubmiſſion. Let a child have ever ſuch an affection for his parent, he will always languiſh to play and chat with children; and the very reſpect which

he entertains, for filial eſteem always has a daſh of fear mixed with it, will, if it do not teach him cunning, at leaſt prevent him from pouring out the little ſecrets which firſt open the heart to friendſhip and confidence, gradually leading to more expanſive benevolence. Added to this, he will never acquire that frank ingenuouſneſs of behaviour, which young people can only attain by being frequently in ſociety where they dare to ſpeak what they think; neither afraid of being reproved for their preſumption, nor laughed at for their folly.

Forcibly impreſſed by the reflections which the ſight of ſchools, as they are at preſent conducted, naturally ſuggeſted, I have formerly delivered my opinion rather warmly in favour of a private education; but further experience has led me to view the ſubject in a different light. I ſtill, however, think ſchools, as they are now regulated, the hotbeds of vice and folly, and the knowledge of human nature, ſuppoſed to be attained there, merely cunning ſelfiſhneſs.

At ſchool boys become gluttons and ſlovens, and, inſtead of cultivating domeſtic affections, very early ruſh into the libertiniſm which deſtroys the conſtitution before it is formed; hardening the heart as it weakens the underſtanding.

I ſhould, in fact, be averſe to boarding-ſchools, if it were for no other reaſon than the unſettled ſtate of mind which the expectation of the vacations produce. On theſe the children's thoughts are fixed with eager anticipating hopes, for, at leaſt, to ſpeak with moderation, half of the time, and when they arrive they are ſpent in total diſſipation and beaſtly indulgence.

But, on the contrary, when they are brought up at home, though they may purſue a plan of ſtudy in a more orderly manner than can be adopted when near a fourth part of the year is actually ſpent in idleneſs, and as much more in regret and anticipation; yet they there acquire too high an opinion of their own importance, from being allowed to tyrannize over ſervants, and from the anxiety expreſſed by moſt mothers, on the ſcore of manners, who, eager to teach the accompliſhments of a gentleman, ſtifle, in their birth, the virtues of a man. Thus brought into company when they ought to be ſeriouſly employed, and treated like men when they are ſtill boys, they become vain and effeminate.

The only way to avoid two extremes equally injurious to morality, would be to contrive ſome way of combining a public and private education. Thus to make men citizens two natural ſteps might be taken, which ſeem directly to lead to the deſired point; for the domeſtic affections, that firſt open the heart to the various modifications of humanity, would be cultivated, whilſt the children were nevertheleſs allowed to ſpend great part of their time, on terms of equality, with other children.

I ſtill recollect, with pleaſure, the country day ſchool; where a boy trudged in the morning, wet or dry, carrying his books, and his dinner, if it were at a conſiderable diſtance; a ſervant did not then lead maſter by the hand, for, when he had once put on coat and breeches, he was allowed to ſhift for himſelf, and return alone in the evening to recount the feats of the day cloſe at the parental knee. His father's houſe was his home, and was ever after fondly remembered; nay, I appeal to ſome ſuperiour men, who were educated in this manner, whether the recollection of ſome ſhady lane where they conned their leſſon; or, of ſome ſtile, where they ſat making a kite, or mending a bat, has not endeared their country to them?

But, what boy ever recollected with pleaſure the years he ſpent in cloſe confinement, at an academy near London? unleſs, indeed, he ſhould, by chance, remember the poor ſcare-crow of an uſher, whom he tormented; or, the tartman, from whom he caught a cake, to devour it with the catiſh appetite of ſelfiſhneſs. At boarding-ſchools of every deſcription, the relaxation of the junior boys is miſchief; and of the ſenior, vice. Beſides, in great ſchools, what can be more prejudicial to the moral character than the ſyſtem of tyranny and abject ſlavery which is eſtabliſhed amongſt the boys, to ſay nothing of the ſlavery to forms, which makes religion worſe than a farce? For what good can be expected from the youth who receives the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, to avoid forfeiting half a guinea, which he probably afterwards ſpends in ſome ſenſual manner? Half the employment of the youths is to elude the neceſſity of attending public worſhip; and well they may, for ſuch a conſtant repetition of the

ſame thing muſt be a very irkſome reſtraint on their natural vivacity. As theſe ceremonies have the moſt fatal effect on their morals, and as a ritual performed by the lips, when the heart and mind are far away, is not now ſtored up by our church as a bank to draw on for the fees of the poor ſouls in purgatory, why ſhould they not be aboliſhed?

But the fear of innovation, in this country, extends to every thing.—This is only a covert fear, the apprehenſive timidity of indolent ſlugs, who guard, by ſliming it over, the ſnug place, which they conſider in the light of an hereditary eſtate; and eat, drink, and enjoy themſelves, inſtead of fulfilling the duties, excepting a few empty forms, for which it was endowed. Theſe are the people who moſt ſtrenuouſly inſiſt on the will of the founder being obſerved, crying out againſt all reformation, as if it were a violation of juſtice. I am now alluding particularly to the relicks of popery retained in our colleges, when the proteſtant members ſeem to be ſuch ſticklers for the eſtabliſhed church; but their zeal never makes them loſe ſight of the ſpoil of ignorance, which rapacious prieſts of ſuperſtitious memory have ſcraped together. No, wiſe in their generation, they venerate the preſcriptive right of poſſeſſion, as a ſtrong hold, and ſtill let the ſluggiſh bell tinkle to prayers, as during the days when the elevation of the hoſt was ſuppoſed to atone for the ſins of the people, leſt one reformation ſhould lead to another, and the ſpirit kill the letter. Theſe Romiſh cuſtoms have the moſt baneful effect on the morals of our clergy; for the idle vermin who two or three times a day perform in the moſt ſlovenly manner a ſervice which they think uſeleſs, but call their duty, ſoon loſe a ſenſe of duty. At college, forced to attend or evade public worſhip, they acquire an habitual contempt for the very ſervice, the performance of which is to enable them to live in idleneſs. It is mumbled over as an affair of buſineſs, as a ſtupid boy repeats his taſk, and frequently the college cant eſcapes from the preacher the moment after he has left the pulpit, and even whilſt he is eating the dinner which he earned in ſuch a diſhoneſt manner.

Nothing, indeed, can be more irreverent than the cathedral ſervice as it is now performed in this country, nor does it contain a ſet of weaker men than thoſe who are the ſlaves of this childiſh routine. A diſguſting ſkeleton of the former ſtate is ſtill exhibited; but all the ſolemnity that intereſted the imagination, if it did not purify the heart, is ſtripped off. The performance of high maſs on the continent muſt impreſs every mind, where a ſpark of fancy glows, with that awful melancholy, that ſublime tenderneſs, ſo near akin to devotion. I do not ſay that theſe devotional feelings are of more uſe, in a moral ſenſe, than any other emotion of taſte; but I contend that the theatrical pomp which gratifies our ſenſes, is to be preferred to the cold parade that inſults the underſtanding without reaching the heart.

Amongſt remarks on national education, ſuch obſervations cannot be miſplaced, eſpecially as the ſupporters of theſe eſtabliſhments, degenerated into puerilities, affect to be the champions of religion.—Religion, pure ſource of comfort in this vale of tears! how haſt thy clear ſtream been muddied by the dabblers, who have preſumptuouſly endeavoured to confine in one narrow channel, the living waters that ever flow towards God

—the ſublime ocean of exiſtence! What would life be without that peace which the love of God, when built on humanity, alone can impart? Every earthly affection turns back, at intervals, to prey upon the heart that feeds it; and the pureſt effuſions of benevolence, often rudely damped by man, muſt mount as a free-will offering to Him who gave them birth, whoſe bright image they faintly reflect.

In public ſchools, however, religion, confounded with irkſome ceremonies and unreaſonable reſtraints, aſſumes the moſt ungracious aſpect: not the ſober auſtere one that commands reſpect whilſt it inſpires fear; but a ludicrous caſt, that ſerves to point a pun. For, in fact, moſt of the good ſtories and ſmart things which enliven the ſpirits that have been concentrated at whiſt, are manufactured out of the incidents to which the very men labour to give a droll turn who countenance the abuſe to live on the ſpoil.

There is not, perhaps, in the kingdom, a more dogmatical, or luxurious ſet of men, than the pedantic tyrants who reſide in colleges and preſide at public ſchools. The vacations are equally injurious to the morals of the maſters and pupils, and the intercourſe, which the former keep up with the nobility, introduces the ſame vanity and extravagance into their families, which baniſhes domeſtic duties and comforts from the lordly manſion, whoſe ſtate is awkwardly aped on a ſmaller ſcale. The boys, who live at a great expence with the maſters and aſſiſtants, are never domeſticated, though placed there for that purpoſe; for, after a ſilent dinner, they ſwallow a haſty glaſs of wine, and retire to plan ſome miſchievous trick, or to ridicule the perſon or manners of the very people they have juſt been cringing to, and whom they ought to conſider as the repreſentatives of their parents.

Can it then be a matter of ſurpriſe that boys become ſelfiſh and vicious who are thus ſhut out from ſocial converſe? or that a mitre often graces the brow of one of theſe diligent paſtors?

The deſire of living in the ſame ſtyle, as the rank juſt above them, infects each individual and every claſs of people, and meanneſs is the concomitant of this ignoble ambition; but thoſe profeſſions are moſt debaſing whoſe ladder is patronage; yet, out of one of theſe profeſſions the tutors of youth are, in general, choſen. But, can they be expected to inſpire independent ſentiments, whoſe conduct muſt be regulated by the cautious prudence that is ever on the watch for preferment?

So far, however, from thinking of the morals of boys, I have heard ſeveral maſters of ſchools argue, that they only undertook to teach Latin and Greek; and that they had fulfilled their duty, by ſending ſome good ſcholars to college.

A few good ſcholars, I grant, may have been formed by emulation and diſcipline; but, to bring forward theſe clever boys, the health and morals of a number have been ſacrificed. The ſons of our gentry and wealthy commoners are moſtly educated at theſe ſeminaries, and will any one pretend to aſſert that the majority, making every allowance, come under the deſcription of tolerable ſcholars?

It is not for the benefit of ſociety that a few brilliant men ſhould be brought forward at the expence of the multitude. It is true, that great men ſeem to ſtart up, as great revolutions occur, at proper intervals, to reſtore order, and to blow aſide the clouds that thicken over the face of truth; but let more reaſon and virtue prevail in ſociety, and theſe ſtrong winds would not be neceſſary. Public education, of every denomination, ſhould be directed to form citizens; but if you wiſh to make good citizens, you muſt firſt exerciſe the affections of a ſon and a brother. This is the only way to expand the heart; for public affections, as well as public virtues, muſt ever grow out of the private character, or they are merely meteors that ſhoot athwart a dark ſky and diſappear as they are gazed at and admired.

Few, I believe, have had much affection for mankind, who did not firſt love their parents, their brothers, ſiſters, and even the domeſtic brutes, whom they firſt played with. The exerciſe of youthful ſympathies forms the moral temperature; and it is the recollection of theſe firſt affections and purſuits that gives life to thoſe that are afterwards more under the direction of reaſon. In youth, the fondeſt friendſhips are formed, the genial juices mounting at the ſame time, kindly mix; or, rather the heart, tempered for the reception of friendſhip, is accuſtomed to ſeek for pleaſure in ſomething more noble than the churliſh gratification of appetite.

In order then to inſpire a love of home and domeſtic pleaſures, children ought to be educated at home, for riotous holidays only make them fond of home for their own ſakes. Yet, the vacations, which do not foſter domeſtic affections, continually diſturb the courſe of ſtudy, and render any plan of improvement abortive which includes temperance; ſtill, were they aboliſhed, children would be entirely ſeparated from their parents, and I queſtion whether they would become better citizens by ſacrificing the preparatory affections, by deſtroying the force of relationſhips that render the marriage ſtate as neceſſary as reſpectable. But, if a private education produces ſelf-importance, or inſulates a man in his family, the evil is only ſhifted, not remedied.

This train of reaſoning brings me back to a ſubject, on which I mean to dwell, the neceſſity of eſtabliſhing proper day-ſchools.

But, theſe ſhould be national eſtabliſhments, for whilſt ſchool-maſters are dependent on the caprice of parents, little exertion can be expected from them, more than is neceſſary to pleaſe ignorant people. Indeed, the neceſſity of a maſter's giving the parents ſome ſample of the boys abilities, which during

the vacation is ſhewn to every viſitor[*], is productive of more miſchief than would at firſt be ſuppoſed. For they are ſeldom done entirely, to ſpeak with moderation, by the child itſelf; thus the maſter countenances falſehood, or winds the poor machine up to ſome extraordinary exertion, that injures the wheels, and ſtops the progreſs of gradual improvement. The memory is loaded with unintelligible words, to make a ſhew of, without the underſtanding's acquiring any diſtinct ideas: but only that education deſerves emphatically to be termed cultivation of mind, which teaches young people how to begin to think. The imagination ſhould not be allowed to debauch the underſtanding before it gained ſtrength, or vanity will become the forerunner of vice: for every way of exhibiting the acquirements of a child is injurious to its moral character.

How much time is loſt in teaching them to recite what they do not underſtand? whilſt, ſeated on benches, all in their beſt array, the mammas liſten with aſtoniſhment to the parrot-like prattle, uttered in ſolemn cadences, with all the pomp of ignorance and folly. Such exhibitions only ſerve to ſtrike the ſpreading fibres of vanity through the whole mind; for they neither teach children to ſpeak fluently, nor behave gracefully. So far from it, that theſe frivolous purſuits might comprehenſively be termed the ſtudy of affectation; for we now rarely ſee a ſimple, baſhful boy, though few people of taſte were ever diſguſted by that awkward ſheepiſhneſs ſo natural to the age, which ſchools and an early introduction into ſociety, have changed into impudence and apiſh grimace.

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[*] I now particularly allude to the numerous academies in, and about London, and to the behaviour of the trading part of this great city.

Yet, how can theſe things be remedied whilſt ſchool-maſters depend entirely on parents for a ſubſiſtence; and, when ſo many rival ſchools hang out their lures, to catch the attention of vain fathers and mothers, whoſe parental affection only leads them to wiſh that their children ſhould outſhine thoſe of their neighbours?

Without great good luck, a ſenſible, conſcientious man, would ſtarve before he could raiſe a ſchool, if he diſdained to bubble weak parents by practiſing the ſecret tricks of the craft.

In the beſt regulated ſchools, however, where ſwarms are not crammed together, many bad habits muſt be acquired; but, at common ſchools, the body, heart, and underſtanding, are equally ſtunted, for parents are often only in queſt of the cheapeſt ſchool, and the maſter could not live, if he did not take a much greater number than he could manage himſelf; nor will the ſcanty pittance, allowed for each child, permit him to hire uſhers ſufficient to aſſiſt in the diſcharge of the mechanical part of the buſineſs. Beſides, whatever appearance the houſe and garden may make, the children do not enjoy the comfort of either, for they are continually reminded by irkſome reſtrictions that they are not at home, and the ſtate-rooms, garden, &c. muſt be kept in order for the recreation of the parents; who, of a Sunday, viſit the ſchool, and are impreſſed by the very parade that renders the ſituation of their children uncomfortable.

With what diſguſt have I heard ſenſible women, for girls are more reſtrained and cowed than boys, ſpeak of the weariſome confinement, which they endured at ſchool. Not allowed, perhaps, to ſtep out of one broad walk in a ſuperb garden, and obliged to pace with ſteady deportment ſtupidly backwards and forwards, holding up their heads and turning out their toes, with ſhoulders braced back, inſtead of bounding, as nature directs to complete her own deſign, in the various attitudes ſo conducive to health[*]. The pure animal ſpirits, which make both mind and body ſhoot out, and unfold the tender bloſſoms of hope, are turned ſour, and vented in vain wiſhes, or pert repinings, that contract the faculties and ſpoil the temper; elſe they mount to the brain, and ſharpening the underſtanding before it gains proportionable ſtrength, produce that pitiful cunning which

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[*] I remember a circumſtance that once came under my own obſervation, and raiſed my indignation. I went to viſit a little boy at a ſchool where young children were prepared for a larger one. The maſter took me into the ſchool-room, &c. but whilſt I walked down a broad gravel walk, I could not help obſerving that the graſs grew very luxuriantly on each ſide of me. I immediately aſked the child ſome queſtions, and found that the poor boys were not allowed to ſtir off the walk, and that the maſter ſometimes permitted ſheep to be turned in to crop the untrodden graſs. The tyrant of this domain uſed to ſit by a window that overlooked the priſon yard, and one nook turning from it, where the unfortunate babes could ſport freely, he encloſed, and planted it with potatoes. The wife likewiſe was equally anxious to keep the children in order, leſt they ſhould dirty or tear their clothes.

diſgracefully characterizes the female mind—and I fear will ever characterize it whilſt women remain the ſlaves of power!

The little reſpect which the male world pay to chaſtity is, I am perſuaded, the grand ſource of many of the phyſical and moral evils that torment mankind, as well as of the vices and follies that degrade and deſtroy women; yet at ſchool, boys infallibly loſe that decent baſhfulneſs, which might have ripened into modeſty, at home.

And what naſty indecent tricks do they alſo learn from each other, when a number of them pig together in the ſame bedchamber, not to ſpeak of the vices, which render the body weak, whilſt they effectually prevent the acquiſition of any delicacy of mind. The little attention paid to the cultivation of modeſty, amongſt men, produces great depravity in all the relationſhips of ſociety; for, not only love—love that ought to purify the heart, and firſt call forth all the youthful powers, to prepare the man to diſcharge the benevolent duties of life, is ſacrificed to premature luſt; but, all the ſocial affections are deadened by the ſelfiſh gratifications, which very early pollute the mind, and dry up the generous juices of the heart. In what an unnatural manner is innocence often violated; and what ſerious conſequences enſue to render private vices a public peſt. Beſides, an habit of perſonal order, which has more effect on the moral character, than is, in general, ſuppoſed, can only be acquired at home, where that reſpectable reſerve is kept up which checks the familiarity, that ſinking into beaſtlineſs, undermines the affection it inſults.

I have already animadverted on the bad habits which females acquire when they are ſhut up together; and, I think, that the obſervation may fairly be extended to the other ſex, till the natural inference is drawn which I have had in view throughout—that to improve both ſexes they ought, not only in private families, but in public ſchools, to be educated together. If marriage be the cement of ſociety, mankind ſhould all be educated after the ſame model, or the intercourſe of the ſexes will never deſerve the name of fellowſhip, nor will women ever fulfil the peculiar duties of their ſex, till they become enlightened citizens, till they become free by being enabled to earn their own

ſubſiſtence, independent of men; in the ſame manner, I mean, to prevent miſconſtruction, as one man is independent of another. Nay, marriage will never be held ſacred till women, by being brought up with men, are prepared to be their companions rather than their miſtreſſes; for the mean doublings of cunning will ever render them contemptible, whilſt oppreſſion renders them timid. So convinced am I of this truth, that I will venture to predict that virtue will never prevail in ſociety till the virtues of both ſexes are founded on reaſon; and, till the affections common to both are allowed to gain their due ſtrength by the diſcharge of mutual duties.

Were boys and girls permitted to purſue the ſame ſtudies together, thoſe graceful decencies might early be inculcated which produce modeſty without thoſe ſexual diſtinctions that taint the mind. Leſſons of politeneſs, and that formulary of decorum, which treads on the heels of falſehood, would be rendered uſeleſs by habitual propriety of behaviour. Not indeed, put on for viſitors like the courtly robe of politeneſs, but the ſober effect of cleanlineſs of mind. Would not this ſimple elegance of ſincerity be a chaſte homage paid to domeſtic affections, far ſurpaſſing the meretricious compliments that ſhine with falſe luſtre in the heartleſs intercourſe of faſhionable life? But, till more underſtanding preponderate in ſociety, there will ever be a want of heart and taſte, and the harlot's *rouge* will ſupply the place of that celeſtial ſuffuſion which only virtuous affections can give to the face. Gallantry, and what is called love, may ſubſiſt without ſimplicity of character; but the main pillars of friendſhip, are reſpect and confidence—eſteem is never founded on it cannot tell what!

A taſte for the fine arts requires great cultivation; but not more than a taſte for the virtuous affections; and both ſuppoſe that enlargement of mind which opens ſo many ſources of mental pleaſure. Why do people hurry to noiſy ſcenes, and crowded circles? I ſhould anſwer, becauſe they want activity of mind, becauſe they have not cheriſhed the virtues of the heart. They only, therefore, ſee and feel in the groſs, and continually pine after variety, finding every thing that is ſimple inſipid.

This argument may be carried further than philoſophers are aware of, for if nature deſtined woman, in particular, for the diſcharge of domeſtic duties, ſhe made her ſuſceptible of the attached affections in a great degree. Now women are notoriouſly fond of pleaſure; and, naturally muſt be ſo according to my definition, becauſe they cannot enter into the minutiæ of domeſtic taſte; lacking judgment, the foundation of all taſte. For the underſtanding, in ſpite of ſenſual cavillers, reſerves to itſelf the privilege of conveying pure joy to the heart.

With what a languid yawn have I ſeen an admirable poem thrown down, that a man of true taſte returns to, again and again with rapture; and, whilſt melody has almoſt ſuſpended reſpiration, a lady has aſked me where I bought my gown. I have ſeen alſo an eye glanced coldly over a moſt exquiſite picture, reſt, ſparkling with pleaſure, on a caricature rudely ſketched; and whilſt ſome terrific feature in nature has ſpread a ſublime ſtillneſs through my ſoul, I have been deſired to obſerve the pretty tricks of a lap-dog, that my perverſe fate forced me to travel with. Is it ſurpriſing that ſuch a taſteleſs being ſhould

ſhould rather careſs this dog than her children? Or, that ſhe ſhould prefer the rant of flattery to the ſimple accents of ſincerity?

To illuſtrate this remark I muſt be allowed to obſerve, that men of the firſt genius, and moſt cultivated minds, have appeared to have the higheſt reliſh for the ſimple beauties of nature; and they muſt have forcibly felt, what they have ſo well deſcribed, the charm, which natural affections, and unſophiſticated feelings ſpread round the human character. It is this power of looking into the heart, and reſponſively vibrating with each emotion, that enables the poet to perſonify each paſſion, and the painter to ſketch with a pencil of fire.

True taſte is ever the work of the underſtanding employed in obſerving natural effects; and till women have more underſtanding, it is vain to expect them to poſſeſs domeſtic taſte. Their lively ſenſes will ever be at work to harden their hearts, and the emotions ſtruck out of them will continue to be vivid and tranſitory, unleſs a proper education ſtores their mind with knowledge.

It is the want of domeſtic taſte, and not the acquirement of knowledge, that takes women out of their families, and tears the ſmiling babe from the breaſt that ought to afford it nouriſhment. Women have been allowed to remain in ignorance, and ſlaviſh dependence, many, very many years, and ſtill we hear of nothing but their fondneſs of pleaſure and ſway, their preference of rakes and ſoldiers, their childiſh attachment to toys, and the vanity that makes them value accompliſhments more than virtues.

Hiſtory brings forward a fearful catalogue of the crimes which their cunning has produced, when the weak ſlaves have had ſufficient addreſs to over-reach their maſters. In France, and in how many other countries, have men been the luxurious deſpots, and women the crafty miniſters?—Does this prove that ignorance and dependence domeſticate them? Is not their folly the by-word of the libertines, who relax in their ſociety; and do not men of ſenſe continually lament that an immoderate fondneſs for dreſs and diſſipation carries the mother of a family for ever from home. Their hearts have not been debauched by knowledge, nor their minds led aſtray by ſcientific purſuits; yet, they do not fulfil the peculiar duties which as women they are called upon by nature to fulfil. On the contrary, the ſtate of warfare which ſubſiſts between the ſexes, makes them employ thoſe wiles, that fruſtrate the more open deſigns of force.

When, therefore, I call women ſlaves, I mean in a political and civil ſenſe; for, indirectly they obtain too much power, and are debaſed by their exertions to obtain illicit ſway.

Let an enlightened nation * then try what effect reaſon would have to bring them back to nature, and their duty; and allowing them to ſhare the advantages of education and government with man, ſee whether they will become better, as they grow wiſer and become free. They cannot be injured by the experiment; for it is not in the power of man to render them more inſignificant than they are at preſent.

To render this practicable, day ſchools, for particular ages, ſhould be eſtabliſhed by government, in which boys and girls might be educated together. The ſchool for the younger children, from five to nine years of

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* France.

age, ought to be abſolutely free and open to all claſſes *. A ſufficient number of maſters ſhould alſo be choſen by a ſelect committee, in each pariſh, to whom any complaint of negligence, &c. might be made, if ſigned by ſix of the children's parents.

Uſhers would then be unneceſſary; for I believe experience will ever prove that this kind of ſubordinate authority is particularly injurious to the morals of youth. What, indeed, can tend to deprave the character more than outward ſubmiſſion and inward contempt? Yet how can boys be expected to treat an uſher with reſpect, when the maſter ſeems to conſider him in the light of a ſervant, and almoſt to countenance the ridicule which becomes the chief amuſement of the boys during the play hours.

But nothing of this kind could occur in an elementary day-ſchool, where boys and girls, the rich and poor, ſhould meet together. And to prevent any of the diſtinctions of vanity, they ſhould be dreſſed alike, and all obliged to ſubmit to the ſame diſcipline,

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* Treating this part of the ſubject, I have borrowed ſome hints from a very ſenſible pamphlet, written by the late biſhop of Autun on Public Education.

or leave the ſchool. The ſchool-room ought to be ſurrounded by a large piece of ground, in which the children might be uſefully exerciſed, for at this age they ſhould not be confined to any ſedentary employment for more than an hour at a time. But theſe relaxations might all be rendered a part of elementary education, for many things improve and amuſe the ſenſes, when introduced as a kind of ſhow, to the principles of which, dryly laid down, children would turn a deaf ear. For inſtance, botany, mechanics, and aſtronomy. Reading, writing, arithmetic, natural hiſtory, and ſome ſimple experiments in natural philoſophy, might fill up the day; but theſe purſuits ſhould never encroach on gymnaſtic plays in the open air. The elements of religion, hiſtory, the hiſtory of man, and politics, might alſo be taught, by converſations, in the ſocratic form.

After the age of nine, girls and boys, intended for domeſtic employments, or mechanical trades, ought to be removed to other ſchools, and receive inſtruction, in ſome meaſure appropriated to the deſtination of each individual, the two ſexes being ſtill together in the morning; but in the afternoon, the girls ſhould attend a ſchool, where plain-work, mantua-making, millinery, &c. would be their employment.

The young people of ſuperior abilities, or fortune, might now be taught in another ſchool, the dead and living languages, the elements of ſcience, and continue the ſtudy of hiſtory and politics, on a more extenſive ſcale, which would not exclude polite literature.

Girls and boys ſtill together? I hear ſome readers aſk: yes. And I ſhould not fear any other conſequence than that ſome early attachment might take place; which, whilſt it had the beſt effect on the moral character of the young people, might not perfectly agree with the views of the parents, for it will be a long time, I fear, before the world is ſo enlightened that parents, only anxious to render their children virtuous, will let them chooſe companions for life themſelves.

Beſides, this would be a ſure way to promote early marriages, and from early marriages the moſt ſalutary phyſical and moral effects naturally flow. What a different character does a married citizen aſſume from the ſelfiſh coxcomb, who lives, but for himſelf, and who is often afraid to marry leſt he ſhould not be able to live in a certain ſtyle. Great emergencies excepted, which would rarely occur in a ſociety of which equality was the baſis, a man can only be prepared to diſcharge the duties of public life, by the habitual practice of thoſe inferiour ones which form the man.

In this plan of education the conſtitution of boys would not be ruined by the early debaucheries, which now makes men ſo ſelfiſh, nor girls rendered weak and vain, by indolence, and frivolous purſuits. But, I preſuppoſe, that ſuch a degree of equality ſhould be eſtabliſhed between the ſexes as would ſhut out gallantry and coquetry, yet allow friendſhip and love to temper the heart for the diſcharge of higher duties.

Theſe would be ſchools of morality—and the happineſs of man, allowed to flow from the pure ſprings of duty and affection, what advances might not the human mind make? Society can only be happy and free in proportion as it is virtuous; but the preſent diſtinctions, eſtabliſhed in ſociety, corrode all private, and blaſt all public virtue.

I have already inveighed againſt the cuſtom of confining girls to their needle, and ſhutting them out from all political and civil employments; for by thus narrowing their minds they are rendered unfit to fulfil the peculiar duties which nature has aſſigned them.

Only employed about the little incidents of the day, they neceſſarily grow up cunning. My very ſoul has often ſickened at obſerving the ſly tricks practiſed by women to gain ſome fooliſh thing on which their ſilly hearts were ſet. Not allowed to diſpoſe of money, or call any thing their own, they learn to turn the market penny; or, ſhould a huſband offend, by ſtaying from home, or give riſe to ſome emotions of jealouſy—a new gown, or any pretty bawble, ſmooths Juno's angry brow.

But theſe *littleneſſes* would not degrade their character, if women were led to reſpect themſelves, if political and moral ſubjects were opened to them; and, I will venture to affirm, that this is the only way to make them properly attentive to their domeſtic duties.—An active mind embraces the whole circle of its duties, and finds time enough for all. It is not, I aſſert, a bold attempt to emulate maſculine virtues; it is not the enchantment of literary purſuits, or the ſteady inveſtigation of ſcientific ſubjects, that lead women aſtray from duty. No, it is indolence and vanity—the love of pleaſure and the love of ſway, that will reign paramount in an empty mind. I ſay empty emphatically, becauſe the education which women now receive ſcarcely deſerves the name. For the little knowledge that they are led to acquire, during the important years of youth, is merely relative to accompliſhments; and accompliſhments without a bottom, for unleſs the underſtanding be cultivated, ſuperficial and monotonous is every grace. Like the charms of a made up face, they only ſtrike the ſenſes in a crowd; but at home, wanting mind, they want variety. The conſequence is obvious; in gay ſcenes of diſſipation we meet the artificial mind and face, for thoſe who fly from ſolitude dread, next to ſolitude, the domeſtic circle; not having it in their power to amuſe or intereſt, they feel their own inſignificance, or find nothing to amuſe or intereſt themſelves.

Beſides, what can be more indelicate than a girl's *coming out* in the faſhionable world?

Which, in other words, is to bring to market a marriageable miſs, whoſe perſon is taken from one public place to another, richly capariſoned. Yet, mixing in the giddy circle under reſtraint, theſe butterflies long to flutter at large, for the firſt affection of their ſouls is their own perſons, to which their attention has been called with the moſt ſedulous care whilſt they were preparing for the period that decides their fate for life. Inſtead of purſuing this idle routine, ſighing for taſteleſs ſhew, and heartleſs ſtate, with what dignity would the youths of both ſexes form attachments in the ſchools that I have curſorily pointed out; in which, as life advanced, dancing, muſic, and drawing, might be admitted as relaxations, for at theſe ſchools young people of fortune ought to remain, more or leſs, till they were of age. Thoſe, who were deſigned for particular profeſſions, might attend, three or four mornings in the week, the ſchools appropriated for their immediate inſtruction.

I only drop theſe obſervations at preſent, as hints; rather, indeed, as an outline of the plan I mean, than a digeſted one; but I muſt add, that I highly approve of one regulation mentioned in the pamphlet[*] already alluded to, that of making the children and youths independent of the maſters reſpecting puniſhments. They ſhould be tried by their peers, which would be an admirable method of fixing ſound principles of juſtice in the mind, and might have the happieſt effect on the temper, which is very early ſoured or irritated by tyranny, till it becomes peeviſhly cunning, or ferociouſly overbearing.

My imagination darts forward with benevolent fervour to greet theſe amiable and reſpectable groups, in ſpite of the ſneering of cold hearts, who are at liberty to utter, with frigid ſelf-importance, the damning epithet—romantic; the force of which I ſhall endeavour to blunt by repeating the words of an eloquent moraliſt.—‘I know not whether the alluſions of a truly humane heart, whoſe zeal renders every thing eaſy, is not preferable to that rough and repulſing reaſon, which always finds in indifference for the public good, the firſt obſtacle to whatever would promote it.’

I know that libertines will alſo exclaim, that woman would be unſexed by acquiring

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[*] The Biſhop of Autun's.

ſtrength of body and mind, and that beauty, ſoft bewitching beauty! would no longer adorn the daughters of men! I am of a very different opinion, for I think that, on the contrary, we ſhould then ſee dignified beauty, and true grace; to produce which, many powerful phyſical and moral cauſes would concur.—Not relaxed beauty, it is true, nor the graces of helpleſſneſs; but ſuch as appears to make us reſpect the human body as a majeſtic pile fit to receive a noble inhabitant, in the relics of antiquity.

I do not forget the popular opinion that the Grecian ſtatues were not modelled after nature. I mean, not according to the proportions of a particular man; but that beautiful limbs and features were ſelected from various bodies to form an harmonious whole. This might, in ſome degree, be true. The fine ideal picture of an exalted imagination might be ſuperiour to the materials which the painter found in nature, and thus it might with propriety be termed rather the model of mankind than of a man. It was not, however, the mechanical ſelection of limbs and features; but the ebullition of an heated fancy that burſt forth, and the fine ſenſes and enlarged underſtanding of the artiſt ſelected the ſolid matter, which he drew into this glowing focus.

I obſerved that it was not mechanical, becauſe a whole was produced—a model of that grand ſimplicity, of thoſe concurring energies, which arreſt our attention and command our reverence. For only inſipid lifeleſs beauty is produced by a ſervile copy of even beautiful nature. Yet, independent of theſe obſervations, I believe that the human form muſt have been far more beautiful than it is at preſent, becauſe extreme indolence, barbarous ligatures, and many cauſes, which forcibly act on it, in our luxurious ſtate of ſociety, did not retard its expanſion, or render it deformed. Exerciſe and cleanlineſs appear to be not only the ſureſt means of preſerving health, but of promoting beauty, the phyſical cauſes only conſidered; yet, this is not ſufficient, moral ones muſt concur, or beauty will be merely of that ruſtic kind which blooms on the innocent, wholeſome, countenances of ſome country people, whoſe minds have not been exerciſed. To render the perſon perfect, phyſical and moral beauty ought to be attained

at the ſame time; each lending and receiving force by the combination. Judgment muſt reſide on the brow, affection and fancy beam in the eye, and humanity curve the cheek, or vain is the ſparkling of the fineſt eye or the elegantly turned finiſh of the faireſt features: whilſt in every motion that diſplays the active limbs and well-knit joints, grace and modeſty ſhould appear. But this fair aſſemblage is not to be brought together by chance; it is the reward of exertions meet to ſupport each other; for judgment can only be acquired by reflection, affection by the diſcharge of duties, and humanity by the exerciſe of compaſſion to every living creature.

Humanity to animals ſhould be particularly inculcated as a part of national education, for it is not at preſent one of our national virtues. Tenderneſs for their humble dumb domeſtics, amongſt the lower claſs, is oftener to be found in a ſavage than a civilized ſtate. For civilization prevents that intercourſe which creates affection in the rude hut, or mud cabin, and leads uncultivated minds who are only depraved by the refinements which prevail in the ſociety, where they are trodden under foot by the rich, to domineer over them to revenge the inſults that they are obliged to bear from their ſuperiours.

This habitual cruelty is firſt caught at ſchool, where it is one of the rare ſports of the boys to torment the miſerable brutes that fall in their way. The tranſition, as they grow up, from barbarity to brutes to domeſtic tyranny over wives, children, and ſervants, is very eaſy. Juſtice, or even benevolence, will not be a powerful ſpring of action unleſs it be extended to the whole creation; nay, I believe that it may be delivered as an axiom, that thoſe who can ſee pain, unmoved, will ſoon learn to inflict it.

The vulgar are ſwayed by preſent feelings, and the habits which they have accidentally acquired; but on partial feelings much dependence cannot be placed, though they be juſt; for, when they are not invigorated by reflection, cuſtom weakens them, till they are ſcarcely felt. The ſympathies of our nature are ſtrengthened by pondering cogitations, and deadened by thoughtleſs uſe. Macbeth's heart ſmote him more for one murder, the firſt, than for a hundred ſubſequent ones, which were neceſſary to back it. But, when I uſed the epithet vulgar, I did not mean to confine my remark to the poor, for partial humanity, founded on preſent ſenſations, or whim, is quite as conſpicuous, if not more ſo, amongſt the rich.

The lady who ſheds tears for the bird ſtarved in a ſnare, and execrates the devils in the ſhape of men, who goad to madneſs the poor ox, or whip the patient aſs, tottering under a burden above its ſtrength, will, nevertheleſs, keep her coachman and horſes whole hours waiting for her, when the ſharp froſt bites, or the rain beats againſt the well-cloſed windows which do not admit a breath of air to tell her how roughly the wind blows without. And ſhe who takes her dogs to bed, and nurſes them, with a parade of ſenſibility, when ſick, will ſuffer her babes to grow up crooked in a nurſery. This illuſtration of my argument is drawn from a matter of fact. The woman whom I allude to was handſome, reckoned very handſome, by thoſe who do not miſs the mind when the face is plump and fair; but her underſtanding had not been led from female duties by literature, nor her innocence debauched by knowledge. No, ſhe was quite feminine, according to the maſculine acceptation of the word; and, ſo far from loving theſe ſpoiled brutes that filled the place which her children ought to have occupied, ſhe only liſped out a pretty mixture of French and Engliſh nonſenſe, to pleaſe the men who flocked round her. The wife, mother, and human creature, were all ſwallowed up by the factitious character which an improper education and the ſelfiſh vanity of beauty had produced.

I do not like to make a diſtinction without a difference, and I own that I have been as much diſguſted by the fine lady who took her lap-dog to her boſom inſtead of her child; as by the ferocity of a man, who, beating his horſe declared, that he knew as well when he did wrong, as a Chriſtian.

This brood of folly ſhews how miſtaken they are who, if they allow women to leave their harems, do not cultivate their underſtandings, in order to plant virtues in their hearts. For had they ſenſe, they might acquire that domeſtic taſte which would lead them to love with reaſonable ſubordination their whole family, from their huſband to the houſe-dog; nor would they ever inſult humanity in the perſon of the moſt menial ſervant by paying more attention to the comfort of a brute, than to that of a fellow-creature.

My obſervations on national education are obviouſly hints; but I principally wiſh to enforce the neceſſity of educating the ſexes together to perfect both, and of making children ſleep at home that they may learn to love home; yet to make private ſupport, inſtead of ſmothering, public affections, they ſhould be ſent to ſchool to mix with a number of equals, for only by the joſtlings of equality can we form a juſt opinion of ourſelves.

To render mankind more virtuous, and happier of courſe, both ſexes muſt act from the ſame principle; but how can that be expected when only one is allowed to ſee the reaſonableneſs of it? To render alſo the ſocial compact truly equitable, and in order to ſpread thoſe enlightening principles, which alone can meliorate the fate of man, women muſt be allowed to found their virtue on knowledge, which is ſcarcely poſſible unleſs they are educated by the ſame purſuits as men. For they are now made ſo inferiour by ignorance and low deſires, as not to deſerve to be ranked with them; or, by the ſerpentine wrigglings of cunning they mount the tree of knowledge, and only acquire ſufficient to lead men aſtray.

It is plain from the hiſtory of all nations, that women cannot be confined to merely domeſtic purſuits, for they will not fulfil family duties, unleſs their minds take a wider range, and whilſt they are kept in ignorance they become in the ſame proportion the ſlaves of pleaſure as they are the ſlaves of man. Nor can they be ſhut out of great enterpriſes, though the narrowneſs of their minds often make them mar, what they are unable to comprehend.

The libertiniſm, and even the virtues of ſuperior men, will always give women, of ſome deſcription, great power over them; and theſe weak women, under the influence of childiſh paſſions and ſelfiſh vanity, will throw a falſe light over the objects which the very men view with their eyes, who ought to enlighten their judgment. Men of fancy, and thoſe ſanguine characters who moſtly hold the helm of human affairs, in general, relax in the ſociety of women; and ſurely I need not cite to the moſt ſuperficial reader of hiſtory the numerous examples of vice and oppreſſion which the private intrigues of female favourites have produced; not to dwell on the miſchief that naturally ariſes from the blundering interpoſition of well-meaning folly. For in the tranſactions of buſineſs it is much better to have to deal with a knave than a fool, becauſe a knave adheres to ſome plan; and any plan of reaſon may be ſeen through much ſooner than a ſudden flight of folly. The power which vile and fooliſh women have had over wiſe men, who poſſeſſed ſenſibility, is notorious; I ſhall only mention one inſtance.

Who ever drew a more exalted female character than Rouſſeau? though in the lump he conſtantly endeavoured to degrade the ſex. And why was he thus anxious? Truly to juſtify to himſelf the affection which weakneſs and virtue had made him cheriſh for that fool Thereſa. He could not raiſe her to the common level of her ſex; and therefore he laboured to bring woman down to her's. He found her a convenient humble companion, and pride made him determine to find ſome ſuperiour virtues in the being whom he choſe to live with; but did not her conduct during his life, and after his death, clearly ſhew how groſsly he was miſtaken who called her a celeſtial innocent. Nay, in the bitterneſs of his heart, he himſelf laments, that when his bodily infirmities made him no longer treat her like a woman, ſhe ceaſed to have an affection for him. And it was very natural that ſhe ſhould, for having ſo few ſentiments in common, when the ſexual tie was broken, what was to hold her? To hold her affection whoſe ſenſibility was confined to one ſex, nay, to one man, it requires ſenſe to turn ſenſibility into the broad channel of humanity; many women have not mind enough to have an affection for a woman, or a friendſhip for a man. But the ſexual weakneſs that makes woman depend on man for a ſubſiſtence, produces a kind of cattiſh affection which leads a wife to purr about her huſband as ſhe would about any man who fed and careſſed her.

Men are, however, often gratified by this kind of fondneſs, which is confined in a beaſtly manner to themſelves; but ſhould they ever become more virtuous, they will wiſh to converſe at their fire-ſide with a friend, after they ceaſe to play with a miſtreſs.

Beſides, underſtanding is neceſſary to give variety and intereſt to ſenſual enjoyments, for low, indeed, in the intellectual ſcale, is the mind that can continue to love when neither virtue nor ſenſe give a human appearance to an animal appetite. But ſenſe will always preponderate; and if women are not, in general, brought more on a level with men, ſome ſuperiour women, like the Greek courtezans, will aſſemble the men of abilities around them, and draw from their families many citizens, who would have ſtayed at home had their wives had more ſenſe, or the graces which reſult from the exerciſe of the underſtanding and fancy, the legitimate parents of taſte. A woman of talents, if ſhe be not abſolutely ugly, will always obtain great power, raiſed by the weakneſs of her ſex; and in proportion as men acquire virtue and delicacy, by the exertion of reaſon, they will look for both in women, but they can only acquire them in the ſame way that men do.

In France or Italy, have the women confined themſelves to domeſtic life? though they have not hitherto had a political exiſtence, yet, have they not illicitly had great ſway? corrupting themſelves and the men with whoſe paſſions they played. In ſhort, in whatever light I view the ſubject, reaſon and experience convince me that the only method of leading women to fulfil their peculiar duties, is to free them from all reſtraint by allowing them to participate the inherent rights of mankind.

Make them free, and they will quickly become wiſe and virtuous, as men become more ſo; for the improvement muſt be mutual, or the injuſtice which one half of the human race are obliged to ſubmit to, retorting on their oppreſſors, the virtue of men will be worm-eaten by the inſect whom he keeps under his feet.

Let men take their choice, man and woman were made for each other, though not to become one being; and if they will not improve women, they will deprave them!

I ſpeak of the improvement and emancipation of the whole ſex, for I know that the behaviour of a few women, who, by accident, or following a ſtrong bent of nature, have acquired a portion of knowledge ſuperior to that of the reſt of their ſex, has often been overbearing; but there have been inſtances of women who, attaining knowledge, have

have not diſcarded modeſty, nor have they always pedantically appeared to deſpiſe the ignorance which they laboured to diſperſe in their own mind. The exclamations then which any advice reſpecting female learning, commonly produce, eſpecially from pretty women, often ariſe from envy. When they chance to ſee that even the luſtre of their eyes, and the flippant ſportiveneſs of refined coquetry will not always ſecure them attention, during a whole evening, ſhould a woman of a more cultivated underſtanding endeavour to give a rational turn to the converſation, the common ſource of conſolation is, that ſuch women ſeldom get huſbands. What arts have I not ſeen ſilly women uſe to interrupt by *flirtation*, a very ſignificant word to deſcribe ſuch a manœuvre, a rational converſation which made the men forget that they were pretty women.

But, allowing what is very natural to man, that the poſſeſſion of rare abilities is really calculated to excite over-weening pride, diſguſting in both men and women —in what a ſtate of inferiority muſt the female faculties have ruſted when ſuch a ſmall portion of knowledge as thoſe women attained,

attained, who have ſneeringly been termed learned women, could be ſingular?—Sufficiently ſo to puff up the poſſeſſor, and excite envy in her contemporaries, and ſome of the other ſex. Nay, has not a little rationality expoſed many women to the ſevereſt cenſure? I advert to well known facts, for I have frequently heard women ridiculed, and every little weakneſs expoſed, only becauſe they adopted the advice of ſome medical men, and deviated from the beaten track in their mode of treating their infants. I have actually heard this barbarous averſion to innovation carried ſtill further, and a ſenſible woman ſtigmatized as an unnatural mother, who has thus been wiſely ſolicitous to preſerve the health of her children, when in the midſt of her care ſhe has loſt one by ſome of the caſualties of infancy, which no prudence can ward off. Her acquaintance have obſerved, that this was the conſequence of new-fangled notions—the new-fangled notions of eaſe and cleanlineſs. And thoſe who pretending to experience, though they have long adhered to prejudices that have, according to the opinion of the moſt ſagacious phyſicians, thinned the human race, almoſt rejoiced at the diſaſter that gave a kind of ſanction to preſcription.

Indeed, if it were only on this account, the national education of women is of the utmoſt conſequence, for what a number of human ſacrifices are made to that moloch prejudice! And in how many ways are children deſtroyed by the laſciviouſneſs of man? The want of natural affection, in many women, who are drawn from their duty by the admiration of men, and the ignorance of others, render the infancy of man a much more perilous ſtate than that of brutes; yet men are unwilling to place women in ſituations proper to enable them to acquire ſufficient underſtanding to know how even to nurſe their babes.

So forcibly does this truth ſtrike me, that I would reſt the whole tendency of my reaſoning upon it, for whatever tends to incapacitate the maternal character, takes woman out of her ſphere.

But it is vain to expect the preſent race of weak mothers either to take that reaſonable care of a child's body, which is neceſſary to lay the foundation of a good conſtitution, ſuppoſing that it do not ſuffer for the ſins of its fathers; or, to manage its temper ſo judiciouſly that the child will not have, as it grows up, to throw off all that its mother, its firſt inſtructor, directly or indirectly taught; and unleſs the mind has uncommon vigour, womaniſh follies will ſtick to the character throughout life. The weakneſs of the mother will be viſited on the children! And whilſt women are educated to rely on their huſbands for judgment, this muſt ever be the conſequence, for there is no improving an underſtanding by halves, nor can any being act wiſely from imitation, becauſe in every circumſtance of life there is a kind of individuality, which requires an exertion of judgment to modify general rules. The being who can think juſtly in one track, will ſoon extend its intellectual empire; and ſhe who has ſufficient judgment to manage her children, will not ſubmit, right or wrong, to her huſband, or patiently to the ſocial laws which make a nonentity of a wife.

In public ſchools women, to guard againſt the errors of ignorance, ſhould be taught the elements of anatomy and medicine, not only to enable them to take proper care of their own health, but to make them rational nurſes

of their infants, parents, and huſbands; for the bills of mortality are ſwelled by the blunders of ſelf-willed old women, who give noſtrums of their own without knowing any thing of the human frame. It is likewiſe proper, only in a domeſtic view, to make women acquainted with the anatomy of the mind, by allowing the ſexes to aſſociate together in every purſuit; and by leading them to obſerve the progreſs of the human underſtanding in the improvement of the ſciences and arts; never forgetting the ſcience of morality, nor the ſtudy of the political hiſtory of mankind.

A man has been termed a microcoſm; and every family might alſo be called a ſtate. States, it is true, have moſtly been governed by arts that diſgrace the character of man; and the want of a juſt conſtitution, and equal laws, have ſo perplexed the notions of the worldly wiſe, that they more than queſtion the reaſonableneſs of contending for the rights of humanity. Thus morality, polluted in the national reſervoir, ſends off ſtreams of vice to corrupt the conſtituent parts of the body politic; but ſhould more noble, or rather, more juſt principles regulate the laws, which ought to be the government of ſociety, and not thoſe who execute them, duty might become the rule of private conduct.

Beſides, by the exerciſe of their bodies and minds women would acquire that mental activity ſo neceſſary in the maternal character, united with the fortitude that diſtinguiſhes ſteadineſs of conduct from the obſtinate perverſeneſs of weakneſs. For it is dangerous to adviſe the indolent to be ſteady, becauſe they inſtantly become rigorous, and to ſave themſelves trouble, puniſh with ſeverity faults that the patient fortitude of reaſon might have prevented.

But fortitude preſuppoſes ſtrength of mind; and is ſtrength of mind to be acquired by indolent acquieſcence? by aſking advice inſtead of exerting the judgment? by obeying through fear, inſtead of practiſing the forbearance, which we all ſtand in need of ourſelves?—The concluſion which I wiſh to draw, is obvious; make women rational creatures, and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives, and mothers; that is—if men do not neglect the duties of huſbands and fathers.

Diſcuſſing the advantages which a public and private education combined, as I have ſketched, might rationally be expected to produce, I have dwelt moſt on ſuch as are particularly relative to the female world, becauſe I think the female world oppreſſed; yet the gangrene, which the vices engendered by oppreſſion have produced, is not confined to the morbid part, but pervades ſociety at large: ſo that when I wiſh to ſee my ſex become more like moral agents, my heart bounds with the anticipation of the general diffuſion of that ſublime contentment which only morality can diffuſe.

## CHAP. XIII.

### SOME INSTANCES OF THE FOLLY WHICH THE IGNORANCE OF WOMEN GENERATES; WITH CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE MORAL IMPROVEMENT THAT A REVOLUTION IN FEMALE MANNERS MIGHT NATURALLY BE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE.

THERE are many follies, in ſome degree, peculiar to women: ſins againſt reaſon of commiſſion as well as of omiſſion; but all flowing from ignorance or prejudice, I ſhall only point out ſuch as appear to be particularly injurious to their moral character. And in animadverting on them, I wiſh eſpecially to prove, that the weakneſs of mind and body, which men have endeavoured, impelled by various motives, to perpetuate, prevents their diſcharging the peculiar duty of their ſex: for when weakneſs of body will not permit them to ſuckle their children, and weakneſs of mind makes them ſpoil their tempers—is woman in a natural ſtate?

SECT.

### SECT. I.

ONE glaring inſtance of the weakneſs which proceeds from ignorance, firſt claims attention, and calls for ſevere reproof.

In this metropolis a number of lurking leeches infamouſly gain a ſubſiſtence by practiſing on the credulity of women, pretending to caſt nativities, to uſe the technical word; and many females who, proud of their rank and fortune, look down on the vulgar with ſovereign contempt, ſhew by this credulity, that the diſtinction is arbitrary, and that they have not ſufficiently cultivated their minds to riſe above vulgar prejudices. Women, becauſe they have not been led to conſider the knowledge of their duty as the one thing neceſſary to know, or, to live in the preſent moment by the diſcharge of it, are very anxious to peep into futurity, to learn what they have to expect to render life intereſting, and to break the vacuum of ignorance.

I muſt be allowed to expoſtulate ſeriouſly with the ladies who follow theſe idle inventions; for ladies, miſtreſſes of families, are not aſhamed to drive in their own carriages to the door of the cunning man *. And if any of them ſhould peruſe this work, I entreat them to anſwer to their own hearts the following queſtions, not forgetting that they are in the preſence of God.

Do you believe that there is but one God, and that he is powerful, wiſe, and good?

Do you believe that all things were created by him, and that all beings are dependent on him?

Do you rely on his wiſdom, ſo conſpicuous in his works, and in your own frame, and are you convinced that he has ordered all things which do not come under the cognizance of your ſenſes, in the ſame perfect harmony, to fulfil his deſigns?

Do you acknowledge that the power of looking into futurity, and ſeeing things that are not, as if they were, is an attribute of the Creator? And ſhould he, by an impreſſion on the minds of his creatures, think fit to impart to them ſome event hid in the ſhades of

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* I once lived in the neighbourhood of one of theſe men, a *handſome* man, and ſaw with ſurpriſe and indignation, women, whoſe appearance and attendance beſpoke that rank in which females are ſuppoſed to receive a ſuperiour education, flock to his door.

time yet unborn, to whom would the ſecret be revealed by immediate inſpiration? The opinion of ages will anſwer this queſtion—to reverend old men, to people diſtinguiſhed for eminent piety.

The oracles of old were thus delivered by prieſts dedicated to the ſervice of the God who was ſuppoſed to inſpire them. The glare of worldly pomp which ſurrounded theſe impoſtors, and the reſpect paid to them by artful politicians, who knew how to avail themſelves of this uſeful engine to bend the necks of the ſtrong under the dominion of the cunning, ſpread a ſacred myſterious veil of ſanctity over their lies and abominations. Impreſſed by ſuch ſolemn devotional parade, a Greek, or Roman lady might be excuſed, if ſhe enquired of the oracle, when ſhe was anxious to pry into futurity, or inquire about ſome dubious event: and her inquiries, however contrary to reaſon, could not be reckoned impious.—But, can the profeſſors of Chriſtianity ward off that imputation? Can a Chriſtian ſuppoſe that the favourites of the moſt High, the highly favoured, would be obliged to lurk in diſguiſe, and practiſe the moſt diſhoneſt tricks to cheat ſilly women out of the money—which the poor cry for in vain?

Say not that ſuch queſtions are an inſult to common ſenſe—for it is your own conduct, O ye fooliſh women! which throws an odium on your ſex! And theſe reflections ſhould make you ſhudder at your thoughtleſſneſs, and irrational devotion.—For I do not ſuppoſe that all of you laid aſide your religion, ſuch as it is, when you entered thoſe myſterious dwellings. Yet, as I have throughout ſuppoſed myſelf talking to ignorant women, for ignorant ye are in the moſt emphatical ſenſe of the word, it would be abſurd to reaſon with you on the egregious folly of deſiring to know what the Supreme Wiſdom has concealed.

Probably you would not underſtand me, were I to attempt to ſhew you that it would be abſolutely inconſiſtent with the grand purpoſe of life, that of rendering human creatures wiſe and virtuous: and that, were it ſanctioned by God, it would diſturb the order eſtabliſhed in creation; and if it be not ſanctioned by God, do you expect to hear truth? Can events be foretold, events which have not yet aſſumed a body to become ſubject to mortal inſpection, can they be foreſeen by a vicious worldling, who pampers his appetites by preying on the fooliſh ones?

Perhaps, however, you devoutly believe in the devil, and imagine, to ſhift the queſtion, that he may aſſiſt his votaries; but, if really reſpecting the power of ſuch a being, an enemy to goodneſs and to God, can you go to church after having been under ſuch an obligation to him?

From theſe deluſions to thoſe ſtill more faſhionable deceptions, practiſed by the whole tribe of magnetiſers, the tranſition is very natural. With reſpect to them, it is equally proper to aſk women a few queſtions.

Do you know any thing of the conſtruction of the human frame? If not, it is proper that you ſhould be told what every child ought to know, that when its admirable œconomy has been diſturbed by intemperance or indolence, I ſpeak not of violent diſorders, but of chronical diſeaſes, it muſt be brought into a healthy ſtate again, by ſlow degrees, and if the functions of life have not been materially injured, regimen, another word for temperance, air, exerciſe, and a few medicines, preſcribed by perſons who have ſtudied the human body, are the only human means, yet diſcovered, of recovering that ineſtimable bleſſing health, that will bear inveſtigation.

Do you then believe that theſe magnetiſers, who, by hocus pocus tricks, pretend to work a miracle, are delegated by God, or aſſiſted by the ſolver of all theſe kind of difficulties—the devil.

Do they, when they put to flight, as it is ſaid, diſorders that have baffled the powers of medicine, work in conformity to the light of reaſon? or, do they effect theſe wonderful cures by ſupernatural aid?

By a communication, an adept may anſwer, with the world of ſpirits. A noble privilege, it muſt be allowed. Some of the ancients mention familiar dæmons, who guarded them from danger by kindly intimating, we cannot gueſs in what manner, when any danger was nigh; or, pointed out what they ought to undertake. Yet the men who laid claim to this privilege, out of the order of nature, inſiſted that it was the reward, or conſequence, of ſuperiour temperance and piety. But the preſent workers of wonders are not raiſed above their fellows by ſuperiour

temperance or ſanctity. They do not cure for the love of God, but money. Theſe are the prieſts of quackery, though it be true they have not the convenient expedient of ſelling maſſes for ſouls in purgatory, nor churches where they can diſplay crutches, and models of limbs made ſound by a touch or a word.

I am not converſant with the technical terms, nor initiated into the arcana, therefore, I may ſpeak improperly; but it is clear that men who will not conform to the law of reaſon, and earn a ſubſiſtence in an honeſt way, by degrees, are very fortunate in becoming acquainted with ſuch obliging ſpirits. We cannot, indeed, give them credit for either great ſagacity or goodneſs, elſe they would have choſen more noble inſtruments, when they wiſhed to ſhew themſelves the benevolent friends of man.

It is, however, little ſhort of blaſphemy to pretend to ſuch powers!

From the whole tenour of the diſpenſations of Providence, it appears evident to ſober reaſon, that certain vices produce certain effects; and can any one ſo groſsly inſult the wiſdom of God, as to ſuppoſe that a miracle will be allowed to diſturb his general laws, to reſtore to health the intemperate and vicious, merely to enable them to purſue the ſame courſe with impunity? Be whole, and ſin no more, ſaid Jeſus. And, are greater miracles to be performed by thoſe who do not follow his footſteps, who healed the body to reach the mind?

The mentioning of the name of Chriſt, after ſuch vile impoſtors, may diſpleaſe ſome of my readers—I reſpect their warmth; but let them not forget that the followers of theſe deluſions bear his name, and profeſs to be the diſciples of him, who ſaid, by their works we ſhould know who were the children of God or the ſervants of ſin. I allow that it is eaſier to touch the body of a ſaint, or to be magnetiſed, than to reſtrain our appetites or govern our paſſions; but health of body or mind can only be recovered by theſe means, or we make the Supreme Judge partial and revengeful.

Is he a man that he ſhould change, or puniſh out of reſentment? He—the common father, wounds but to heal, ſays reaſon, and our irregularities producing certain conſequences, we are forcibly ſhewn the nature of vice; that thus learning to know good from evil, by experience, we may hate one and love the other, in proportion to the wiſdom which we attain. The poiſon contains the antidote; and we either reform our evil habits and ceaſe to ſin againſt our own bodies, to uſe the forcible language of ſcripture, or a premature death, the puniſhment of ſin, ſnaps the thread of life.

Here an awful ſtop is put to our inquiries. —But, why ſhould I conceal my ſentiments? Conſidering the attributes of God, I believe that whatever puniſhment may follow, will tend, like the anguiſh of diſeaſe, to ſhew the malignity of vice, for the purpoſe of reformation. Poſitive puniſhment appears ſo contrary to the nature of God, diſcoverable in all his works, and in our own reaſon, that I could ſooner believe that the Deity paid no attention to the conduct of men, than that he puniſhed without the benevolent deſign of reforming.

To ſuppoſe only that an all-wiſe and powerful Being, as good as he is great, ſhould create a being foreſeeing, that after fifty or ſixty years of feveriſh exiſtence, it would be plunged into never ending woe—is blaſphemy. On what will the worm feed that is never to die?—On folly, on ignorance, ſay ye—I ſhould bluſh indignantly at drawing the natural concluſion, could I inſert it, and wiſh to withdraw myſelf from the wing of my God!—On ſuch a ſuppoſition, I ſpeak with reverence, he would be a conſuming fire. We ſhould wiſh, though vainly, to fly from his preſence when fear abſorbed love, and darkneſs involved all his counſels!

I know that many devout people boaſt of ſubmitting to the Will of God blindly, as to an arbitrary ſceptre or rod, on the ſame principle as the Indians worſhip the devil. In other words, like people in the common concerns of life, they do homage to power, and cringe under the foot that can cruſh them. Rational religion, on the contrary, is a ſubmiſſion to the will of a being ſo perfectly wiſe, that all he wills muſt be directed by the proper motive—muſt be reaſonable.

And, if thus we reſpect God, can we give credit to the myſterious inſinuations, which inſult his laws? can we believe, though it ſhould ſtare us in the face, that he would work a miracle to authorize confuſion by ſanctioning an error? Yet we muſt either allow theſe impious concluſions, or treat with contempt every promiſe to reſtore health to a diſeaſed body by ſupernatural means, or to foretell the incidents that can only be foreſeen by God.

### SECT. II.

ANOTHER inſtance of that feminine weakneſs of character, often produced by a confined education, is a romantic twiſt of the mind, which has been very properly termed *ſentimental*.

Women ſubjected by ignorance to their ſenſations, and only taught to look for happineſs in love, refine on ſenſual feelings, and adopt metaphyſical notions reſpecting that paſſion, which lead them ſhamefully to neglect the duties of life, and frequently in the midſt of theſe ſublime refinements they plump into actual vice.

Theſe are the women who are amuſed by the reveries of the ſtupid noveliſts, who, knowing little of human nature, work up ſtale tales, and deſcribe meretricious ſcenes, all retailed in a ſentimental jargon, which equally tend to corrupt the taſte, and draw the heart aſide from its daily duties. I do not mention the underſtanding, becauſe never having been exerciſed, its ſlumbering energies reſt inactive, like the lurking particles of fire which are ſuppoſed univerſally to pervade matter.

Females, in fact, denied all political privileges, and not allowed, as married women, excepting in criminal caſes, a civil exiſtence, have their attention naturally drawn from the intereſt of the whole community to that of the minute parts, though the private duty of any member of ſociety muſt be very imperfectly performed when not connected with the general good. The mighty buſineſs of female life is to pleaſe, and reſtrained from entering into more important concerns by political and civil oppreſſion, ſentiments become events, and reflection deepens what it ſhould, and would have effaced, if the underſtanding had been allowed to take a wider range.

But, confined to trifling employments, they naturally imbibe opinions which the only kind of reading calculated to intereſt an innocent frivolous mind, inſpires. Unable to graſp any thing great, is it ſurpriſing that they find the reading of hiſtory a very dry taſk, and diſquiſitions

diſquiſitions addreſſed to the underſtanding intolerably tedious, and almoſt unintelligible? Thus are they neceſſarily dependent on the noveliſt for amuſement. Yet, when I exclaim againſt novels, I mean when contraſted with thoſe works which exerciſe the underſtanding and regulate the imagination.—For any kind of reading I think better than leaving a blank ſtill a blank, becauſe the mind muſt receive a degree of enlargement and obtain a little ſtrength by a ſlight exertion of its thinking powers; beſides, even the productions that are only addreſſed to the imagination, raiſe the reader a little above the groſs gratification of appetites, to which the mind has not given a ſhade of delicacy.

This obſervation is the reſult of experience; for I have known ſeveral notable women, and one in particular, who was a very good woman—as good as ſuch a narrow mind would allow her to be, who took care that her daughters (three in number), ſhould never ſee a novel. As ſhe was a woman of fortune and faſhion, they had various maſters to attend them, and a ſort of menial governeſs to watch their footſteps. From their maſters they learned how tables, chairs, &c. were called in French and Italian; but as the few books thrown in their way were far above their capacities, or devotional, they neither acquired ideas nor ſentiments, and paſſed their time when not compelled to repeat *words*, in dreſſing, quarrelling with each other, or converſing with their maids by ſtealth, till they were brought into company as marriageable.

Their mother, a widow, was buſy in the mean time in keeping up her connections, as ſhe termed a numerous acquaintance, leſt her girls ſhould want a proper introduction into the great world. And theſe young ladies, with minds vulgar in every ſenſe of the word, and ſpoiled tempers, entered life puffed up with notions of their own conſequence, and looking down with contempt on thoſe who could not vie with them in dreſs and parade.

With reſpect to love, nature, or their nurſes, had taken care to teach them the phyſical meaning of the word; and, as they had few topics of converſation, and fewer refinements of ſentiment, they expreſſed their groſs wiſhes not in very delicate phraſes, when they ſpoke freely, talking of matrimony.

Could theſe girls have been injured by the peruſal of novels? I almoſt forgot a ſhade in the character of one of them; ſhe affected a ſimplicity bordering on folly, and with a ſimper would utter the moſt immodeſt remarks and queſtions, the full meaning of which ſhe had learned whilſt ſecluded from the world, and afraid to ſpeak in her mother's preſence, who governed with a high hand: they were all educated, as ſhe prided herſelf, in a moſt exemplary manner; and read their chapters and pſalms before breakfaſt, never touching a ſilly novel.

This is only one inſtance; but I recollect many other women who, not led by degrees to proper ſtudies, and not permitted to chooſe for themſelves, have indeed been overgrown children; or have obtained, by mixing in the world, a little of what is termed common ſenſe; that is a diſtinct manner of ſeeing common occurrences, as they ſtand detached: but what deſerves the name of intellect, the power of gaining general or abſtract ideas, or even intermediate ones, was out of the queſtion. Their minds were quieſcent, and when they were not rouſed by ſenſible objects and employments of that kind, they were low-ſpirited, would cry, or go to ſleep.

When, therefore, I adviſe my ſex not to read ſuch flimſy works, it is to induce them to read ſomething ſuperiour; for I coincide in opinion with a ſagacious man, who, having a daughter and niece under his care, purſued a very different plan with each.

The niece, who had conſiderable abilities, had, before ſhe was left to his guardianſhip, been indulged in deſultory reading. Her he endeavoured to lead, and did lead to hiſtory and moral eſſays; but his daughter, whom a fond, weak mother had indulged, and who conſequently was averſe to every thing like application, he allowed to read novels: and uſed to juſtify his conduct by ſaying, that if ſhe ever attained a reliſh for reading them, he ſhould have ſome foundation to work upon; and that erroneous opinions were better than none at all.

In fact the female mind has been ſo totally neglected, that knowledge was only to be acquired from this muddy ſource, till from reading novels ſome women of ſuperiour talents learned to deſpiſe them.

The beſt method, I believe, that can be adopted to correct a fondneſs for novels is to ridicule them: not indiſcriminately, for then it would have little effect; but, if a judicious perſon, with ſome turn for humour, would read ſeveral to a young girl, and point out both by tones, and apt compariſons with pathetic incidents and heroic characters in hiſtory, how fooliſhly and ridiculouſly they caricatured human nature, juſt opinions might be ſubſtituted inſtead of romantic ſentiments.

In one reſpect, however, the majority of both ſexes reſemble, and equally ſhew a want of taſte and modeſty. Ignorant women, forced to be chaſte to preſerve their reputation, allow their imagination to revel in the unnatural and meretricious ſcenes ſketched by the novel writers of the day, ſlighting as inſipid the ſober dignity and matronly graces of hiſtory *, whilſt men carry the ſame vitiated taſte into life, and fly for amuſement to the wanton, from the unſophiſticated charms of

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* I am not now alluding to that ſuperiority of mind which leads to the creation of ideal beauty, when life, ſurveyed with a penetrating eye, appears a tragi-comedy, in which little can be ſeen to ſatisfy the heart without the help of fancy.

of virtue, and the grave reſpectability of ſenſe.

Beſides, the reading of novels makes women, and particularly ladies of faſhion, very fond of uſing ſtrong expreſſions and ſuperlatives in converſation; and, though the diſſipated artificial life which they lead prevents their cheriſhing any ſtrong legitimate paſſion, the language of paſſion in affected tones ſlips for ever from their glib tongues, and every trifle produces thoſe phoſphoric burſts which only mimick in the dark the flame of paſſion.

## SECT. III.

IGNORANCE and the miſtaken cunning that nature ſharpens in weak heads as a principle of ſelf-preſervation, render women very fond of dreſs, and produce all the vanity which ſuch a fondneſs may naturally be expected to generate, to the excluſion of emulation and magnanimity.

I agree with Rouſſeau that the phyſical part of the art of pleaſing conſiſts in ornaments, and for that very reaſon I ſhould guard girls againſt the contagious fondneſs for dreſs ſo common

common to weak women, that they may not reſt in the phyſical part. Yet, weak are the women who imagine that they can long pleaſe without the aid of the mind, or, in other words, without the moral art of pleaſing. But the moral art, if it be not a profanation to uſe the word art, when alluding to the grace which is an effect of virtue, and not the motive of action, is never to be found with ignorance; the ſportiveneſs of innocence, ſo pleaſing to refined libertines of both ſexes, is widely different in its eſſence from this ſuperiour gracefulneſs.

A ſtrong inclination for external ornaments ever appears in barbarous ſtates, only the men not the women adorn themſelves; for where women are allowed to be ſo far on a level with men, ſociety has advanced, at leaſt, one ſtep in civilization.

The attention to dreſs, therefore, which has been thought a ſexual propenſity, I think natural to mankind. But I ought to expreſs myſelf with more preciſion. When the mind is not ſufficiently opened to take pleaſure in reflection, the body will be adorned with ſedulous care; and ambition will appear in tattooing or painting it.

So far is this firſt inclination carried, that even the helliſh yoke of ſlavery cannot ſtifle the ſavage deſire of admiration which the black heroes inherit from both their parents, for all the hardly earned ſavings of a ſlave are commonly expended in a little tawdry finery. And I have ſeldom known a good male or female ſervant that was not particularly fond of dreſs. Their clothes were their riches; and, I argue from analogy, that the fondneſs for dreſs, ſo extravagant in females, ariſes from the ſame cauſe—want of cultivation of mind. When men meet they converſe about buſineſs, politics, or literature; but, ſays Swift, ‘how naturally do women apply their hands to each others lappets and ruffles.’ And very natural is it—for they have not any buſineſs to intereſt them, have not a taſte for literature, and they find politics dry, becauſe they have not acquired a love for mankind by turning their thoughts to the grand purſuits that exalt the human race, and promote general happineſs.

Beſides, various are the paths to power and fame which by accident or choice men purſue, and though they joſtle againſt each other, for men of the ſame profeſſion are ſeldom friends, yet there is a much greater number of their fellow-creatures with whom they never claſh. But women are very differently ſituated with reſpect to each other—for they are all rivals.

Before marriage it is their buſineſs to pleaſe men; and after, with a few exceptions, they follow the ſame ſcent with all the perſevering pertinacity of inſtinct. Even virtuous women never forget their ſex in company, for they are for ever trying to make themſelves *agreeable*. A female beauty, and a male wit, appear to be equally anxious to draw the attention of the company to themſelves; and the animoſity of contemporary wits is proverbial.

Is it then ſurpriſing that when the ſole ambition of woman centres in beauty, and intereſt gives vanity additional force, perpetual rivalſhips ſhould enſue? They are all running the ſame race, and would riſe above the virtue of mortals, if they did not view each other with a ſuſpicious and even envious eye.

An immoderate fondneſs for dreſs, for pleaſure, and for ſway, are the paſſions of ſavages; the paſſions that occupy thoſe uncivilized beings who have not yet extended the dominion of the mind, or even learned to think with the energy neceſſary to concatenate that abſtract train of thought which produces principles. And that women from their education and the preſent ſtate of civilized life, are in the ſame condition, cannot, I think, be controverted. To laugh at them then, or ſatirize the follies of a being who is never to be allowed to act freely from the light of her own reaſon, is as abſurd as cruel; for, that they who are taught blindly to obey authority, will endeavour cunningly to elude it, is moſt natural and certain.

Yet let it be proved that they ought to obey man implicitly, and I ſhall immediately agree that it is woman's duty to cultivate a fondneſs for dreſs, in order to pleaſe, and a propenſity to cunning for her own preſervation.

The virtues, however, which are ſupported by ignorance, muſt ever be wavering—the houſe built on ſand could not endure a ſtorm. It is almoſt unneceſſary to draw the inference. —If women are to be made virtuous by authority, which is a contradiction in terms, let them be immured in ſeraglios and watched with a jealous eye.—Fear not that the iron will enter into their ſouls—for the ſouls that can bear ſuch treatment are made of yielding materials, juſt animated enough to give life to the body.

'Matter too ſoft a laſting mark to bear,
'And beſt diſtinguiſh'd by black, brown, or fair.'

The moſt cruel wounds will of courſe ſoon heal, and they may ſtill people the world, and dreſs to pleaſe man—all the purpoſes which certain celebrated writers have allowed that they were created to fulfil.

## SECT. IV.

WOMEN are ſuppoſed to poſſeſs more ſenſibility, and even humanity, than men, and their ſtrong attachments and inſtantaneous emotions of compaſſion are given as proofs; but the clinging affection of ignorance has ſeldom any thing noble in it, and may moſtly be reſolved into ſelfiſhneſs, as well as the affection of children and brutes. I have known many weak women whoſe ſenſibility was entirely engroſſed by their huſbands; and as for their humanity, it was very faint indeed, or rather it was only a tranſient emotion of compaſſion. Humanity does not conſiſt in a ſqueamiſh ear,' ſays an eminent orator. ‘ It belongs to the mind as well as ‘ the nerves.’

But this kind of excluſive affection, though it degrades the individual, ſhould not be brought forward as a proof of the inferiority of the ſex, becauſe it is the natural conſequence of confined views: for even women of ſuperior ſenſe, having their attention turned to little employments, and private plans, rarely riſe to heroiſm, unleſs when ſpurred on by love; and love, as an heroic paſſion, like genius, appears but once in an age. I therefore agree with the moraliſt who aſſerts, ‘ that women have ſeldom ſo much generoſity as men;’ and that their narrow affections, to which juſtice and humanity are often ſacrificed, render the ſex apparently inferior, eſpecially, as they are commonly inſpired by men; but I contend that the heart would expand as the underſtanding gained ſtrength, if women were not depreſſed from their cradles.

I know that a little ſenſibility, and great weakneſs, will produce a ſtrong ſexual attachment, and that reaſon muſt cement friendſhip; conſequently, I allow that more friendſhip is to be found in the male than the female world, and that men have a higher ſenſe of juſtice. The excluſive affections of women ſeem indeed to reſemble Cato's moſt unjuſt love for his country. He wiſhed to cruſh Carthage, not to ſave Rome, but to promote its vain-glory; and, in general, it is to ſimilar principles that humanity is ſacrificed, for genuine duties ſupport each other.

Beſides, how can women be juſt or generous, when they are the ſlaves of injuſtice?

## SECT. V.

As the rearing of children, that is, the laying a foundation of ſound health both of body and mind in the riſing generation, has juſtly been inſiſted on as the peculiar deſtination of woman, the ignorance that incapacitates them muſt be contrary to the order of things. And I contend that their minds can take in much more, and ought to do ſo, or they will never become ſenſible mothers. Many men attend to the breeding of horſes, and overlook the management of the ſtable, who would, ſtrange want of ſenſe and feeling! think themſelves degraded by paying any attention to the nurſery; yet, how many children are abſolutely murdered by the ignorance of women! But when they eſcape, and are neither deſtroyed by unnatural negligence nor blind fondneſs, how few are managed properly with reſpect to the infant mind! So that to break the ſpirit, allowed to become vicious at home, a child is ſent to ſchool; and the methods taken there, which muſt be taken to keep a number of children in order, ſcatter the ſeeds of almoſt every vice in the ſoil thus forcibly torn up.

I have ſometimes compared the ſtruggles of theſe poor children who ought never to have felt reſtraint, nor would, had they been always held in with an even hand, to the deſpairing plunges of a ſpirited filly, which I have ſeen breaking on a ſtrand: its feet ſinking deeper and deeper in the ſand every time it endeavoured to throw its rider, till at laſt it ſullenly ſubmitted.

I have always found horſes, an animal I am attached to, very tractable when treated with humanity and ſteadineſs, ſo that I doubt whether the violent methods taken to break them, do not eſſentially injure them; I am, however, certain that a child ſhould never be

thus forcibly tamed after it has injudiciouſly been allowed to run wild; for every violation of juſtice and reaſon, in the treatment of children, weakens their reaſon. And, ſo early do they catch a character, that the baſe of the moral character, experience leads me to infer, is fixed before their ſeventh year, the period during which women are allowed the ſole management of children. Afterwards it too often happens that half the buſineſs of education is to correct, and very imperfectly is it done, if done haſtily, the faults, which they would never have acquired if their mothers had had more underſtanding.

One ſtriking inſtance of the folly of women muſt not be omitted.—The manner in which they treat ſervants in the preſence of children, permitting them to ſuppoſe that they ought to wait on them, and bear their humours. A child ſhould always be made to receive aſſiſtance from a man or woman as a favour; and, as the firſt leſſon of independence, they ſhould practically be taught, by the example of their mother, not to require that perſonal attendance, which it is an inſult to humanity to require, when in health; and inſtead of being led to aſſume airs of conſequence, a ſenſe of their own weakneſs ſhould firſt make them feel the natural equality of man. Yet, how frequently have I indignantly heard ſervants imperiouſly called to put children to bed, and ſent away again and again, becauſe maſter or miſs hung about mamma, to ſtay a little longer. Thus made ſlaviſhly to attend the little idol, all thoſe moſt diſguſting humours were exhibited which characterize a ſpoiled child.

In ſhort, ſpeaking of the majority of mothers, they leave their children entirely to the care of ſervants; or, becauſe they are their children treat them as if they were little demi-gods, though I have always obſerved, that the women who thus idolize their children, ſeldom ſhew common humanity to ſervants, or feel the leaſt tenderneſs for any children but their own.

It is, however, theſe excluſive affections, and an individual manner of ſeeing things, produced by ignorance, which keep women for ever at a ſtand, with reſpect to improvement, and make many of them dedicate their lives to their children only to weaken their bodies and ſpoil their tempers, fruſtrating alſo any plan of education that a more

rational father may adopt; for unleſs a mother concurs, the father who reſtrains will ever be conſidered as a tyrant.

But, fulfilling the duties of a mother, a woman with a ſound conſtitution, may ſtill keep her perſon ſcrupulouſly neat, and aſſiſt to maintain her family, if neceſſary, or by reading and converſations with both ſexes, indiſcriminately, improve her mind. For nature has ſo wiſely ordered things, that did women ſuckle their children, they would preſerve their own health, and there would be ſuch an interval between the birth of each child, that we ſhould ſeldom ſee a houſeful of babes. And did they purſue a plan of conduct, and not waſte their time in following the faſhionable vagaries of dreſs, the management of their houſehold and children need not ſhut them out from literature, nor prevent their attaching themſelves to a ſcience, with that ſteady eye which ſtrengthens the mind, or practiſing one of the fine arts that cultivate the taſte.

But, viſiting to diſplay finery, card-playing, and balls, not to mention the idle buſtle of morning trifling, draw women from their duty to render them inſignificant, to render them pleaſing, according to the preſent acceptation of the word, to every man, but their huſband. For a round of pleaſures in which the affections are not exerciſed, cannot be ſaid to improve the underſtanding, though it be erroneouſly called ſeeing the world; yet the heart is rendered cold and averſe to duty, by ſuch a ſenſeleſs intercourſe, which becomes neceſſary from habit even when it has ceaſed to amuſe.

But, till more equality be eſtabliſhed in ſociety, till ranks are confounded and women freed, we ſhall not ſee that dignified domeſtic happineſs, the ſimple grandeur of which cannot be reliſhed by ignorant or vitiated minds; nor will the important taſk of education ever be properly begun till the perſon of a woman is no longer preferred to her mind. For it would be as wiſe to expect corn from tares, or figs from thiſtles, as that a fooliſh ignorant woman ſhould be a good mother.

## SECT. VI.

It is not neceſſary to inform the ſagacious reader, now I enter on my concluding reflections, that the diſcuſſion of this ſubject merely conſiſts in opening a few ſimple principles, and clearing

away the rubbiſh which obſcured them. But, as all readers are not ſagacious, I muſt be allowed to add ſome explanatory remarks to bring the ſubject home to reaſon—to that ſluggiſh reaſon, which ſupinely takes opinions on truſt, and obſtinately ſupports them to ſpare itſelf the labour of thinking.

Moraliſts have unanimouſly agreed, that unleſs virtue be nurſed by liberty, it will never attain due ſtrength—and what they ſay of man I extend to mankind, inſiſting that in all caſes morals muſt be fixed on immutable principles; and, that the being cannot be termed rational or virtuous, who obeys any authority, but that of reaſon.

To render women truly uſeful members of ſociety, I argue that they ſhould be led, by having their underſtandings cultivated on a large ſcale, to acquire a rational affection for their country, founded on knowledge, becauſe it is obvious, that we are little intereſted about what we do not underſtand. And to render this general knowledge of due importance, I have endeavoured to ſhew that private duties are never properly fulfilled unleſs the underſtanding enlarges the heart; and that public virtue is only an aggregate of private. But, the diſtinctions eſtabliſhed in ſociety undermines both, by beating out the ſolid gold of virtue, till it becomes only the tinſel-covering of vice; for whilſt wealth renders a man more reſpectable than virtue, wealth will be ſought before virtue; and, whilſt women's perſons are careſſed, when a childiſh ſimper ſhews an abſence of mind—the mind will lie fallow. Yet, true voluptuouſneſs muſt proceed from the mind—for what can equal the ſenſations produced by mutual affection, ſupported by mutual reſpect? What are the cold, or feveriſh careſſes of appetite, but ſin embracing death, compared with the modeſt overflowings of a pure heart and exalted imagination? Yes, let me tell the libertine of fancy when he deſpiſes underſtanding in woman—that the mind, which he diſregards, gives life to the enthuſiaſtic affection from which rapture, ſhort-lived as it is, alone can flow! And, that, without virtue, a ſexual attachment muſt expire, like a tallow candle in the ſocket, creating intolerable diſguſt. To prove this, I need only obſerve, that men who have waſted great part of their lives with women, and with whom they have ſought for pleaſure with eager thirſt, entertain the meaneſt opinion of the ſex.—Virtue, true refiner of joy!—if fooliſh men were to fright thee from earth, in order to give looſe to all their appetites without a check—ſome ſenſual wight of taſte would ſcale the heavens to invite thee back, to give a zeſt to pleaſure!

That women at preſent are by ignorance rendered fooliſh or vicious, is, I think, not to be diſputed; and, that the moſt ſalutary effects tending to improve mankind might be expected from a REVOLUTION in female manners, appears, at leaſt, with a face of probability, to riſe out of the obſervation. For as marriage has been termed the parent of thoſe endearing charities which draw man from the brutal herd, the corrupting intercourſe that wealth, idleneſs, and folly, produce between the ſexes, is more univerſally injurious to morality than all the other vices of mankind collectively conſidered. To adulterous luſt the moſt ſacred duties are ſacrificed, becauſe before marriage, men, by a promiſcuous intimacy with women, learned to conſider love as a ſelfiſh gratification—learned to ſeparate it not only from eſteem, but from the affection merely built on habit, which mixes a little humanity with it. Juſtice and friendſhip are alſo ſet at defiance, and that purity of taſte is vitiated which would naturally lead a man to reliſh an artleſs diſplay of affection rather than affected airs. But that noble ſimplicity of affection, which dares to appear unadorned, has few attractions for the libertine, though it be the charm, which by cementing the matrimonial tie, ſecures to the pledges of a warmer paſſion the neceſſary parental attention; for children will never be properly educated till friendſhip ſubſiſts between parents. Virtue flies from a houſe divided againſt itſelf—and a whole legion of devils take up their reſidence there.

The affection of huſbands and wives cannot be pure when they have ſo few ſentiments in common, and when ſo little confidence is eſtabliſhed at home, as muſt be the caſe when their purſuits are ſo different. That intimacy from which tenderneſs ſhould flow, will not, cannot ſubſiſt between the vicious.

Contending, therefore, that the ſexual diſtinction which men have ſo warmly inſiſted upon, is arbitrary, I have dwelt on an obſervation, that ſeveral ſenſible men, with whom I have converſed on the ſubject, allowed to be well founded; and it is ſimply this, that the little chaſtity to be found amongſt men, and conſequent diſregard of modeſty, tend to degrade

both ſexes; and further, that the modeſty of women, characterized as ſuch, will often be only the artful veil of wantonneſs inſtead of being the natural reflection of purity, till modeſty be univerſally reſpected.

From the tyranny of man, I firmly believe, the greater number of female follies proceed; and the cunning, which I allow makes at preſent a part of their character, I likewiſe have repeatedly endeavoured to prove, is produced by oppreſſion.

Were not diſſenters, for inſtance, a claſs of people, with ſtrict truth characterized as cunning? And may I not lay ſome ſtreſs on this fact to prove, that when any power but reaſon curbs the free ſpirit of man, diſſimulation is practiſed, and the various ſhifts of art are naturally called forth? Great attention to decorum, which was carried to a degree of ſcrupuloſity, and all that puerile buſtle about trifles and conſequential ſolemnity, which Butler's caricature of a diſſenter, brings before the imagination, ſhaped their perſons as well as their minds in the mould of prim littleneſs. I ſpeak collectively, for I know how many ornaments to human nature have been enrolled amongſt ſectaries; yet, I aſſert, that the ſame narrow prejudice for their ſect, which women have for their families, prevailed in the diſſenting part of the community, however worthy in other reſpects; and alſo that the ſame timid prudence, or headſtrong efforts, often diſgraced the exertions of both. Oppreſſion thus formed many of the features of their character perfectly to coincide with that of the oppreſſed half of mankind; for is it not notorious that diſſenters were, like women, fond of deliberating together, and aſking advice of each other, till by a complication of little contrivances, ſome little end was brought about? A ſimilar attention to preſerve their reputation was conſpicuous in the diſſenting and female world, and was produced by a ſimilar cauſe.

Aſſerting the rights which women in common with men ought to contend for, I have not attempted to extenuate their faults; but to prove them to be the natural conſequence of their education and ſtation in ſociety. If ſo, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that they will change their character, and correct their vices and follies, when they are allowed to be free in a phyſical, moral, and civil ſenſe *.

Let

Let woman ſhare the rights and ſhe will emulate the virtues of man; for ſhe muſt grow more perfect when emancipated, or juſtify the authority that chains ſuch a weak being to her duty.—If the latter, it will be expedient to open a freſh trade with Ruſſia for whips; a preſent which a father ſhould always make to his ſon-in-law on his wedding day, that a huſband may keep his whole family in order by the ſame means; and without any violation of juſtice reign, wielding this ſceptre, ſole maſter of his houſe, becauſe he is the only being in it who has reaſon:—the divine, indefeaſible earthly ſovereignty breathed into man by the Maſter of the univerſe. Allowing this poſition, women have not any inherent rights to claim, and by the ſame rule, their duties vaniſh, for rights and duties are inſeparable.

Be juſt then, O ye men of underſtanding! and mark not more ſeverely what women do amiſs, than the vicious tricks of

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* I had further enlarged on the advantages which might reaſonably be expected to reſult from an improvement in female

female manners, towards the general reformation of ſociety; but it appeared to me that ſuch reflections would more properly cloſe the laſt volume.

the horſe or the aſs for whom ye provide provender—and allow her the privileges of ignorance, to whom ye deny the rights of reaſon, or ye will be worſe than Egyptian taſk-maſters, expecting virtue where nature has not given underſtanding!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.